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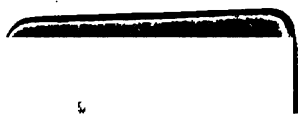
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Last Leaves of the Psalter,  
BEING THE  
FIFTH BOOK  
OF  
THE PSALMS OF DAVID,  
METRICALLY RENDERED.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE FIFTH BOOK OF PSALMS.

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THIS last book will, upon examination, be found as interesting in its very structure as any of the preceding ones.

While it may be concluded from internal evidence that the closing psalms of the fourth book were written and assigned their present place among the psalms during the captivity in Babylon ; so may it, that this one hundred and seventh, wherewith the last book is commenced, was given its present place after the return of the Jews from thence.

Moreover, like as it was observed that the first and second psalms were made by David to be representative of the leading subjects dwelt on in the rest of those arranged by him, namely, Christ and the people of Christ—so we here perceive that the contents of this one hundred and seventh psalm shew it to have been intended to indicate the main subject treated of in the rest of this last book.

This psalm is divided as nearly as possible into six equal portions ; whereof the first four mysteriously prefigure, as it appears to me, the return from time to time of Israelites left yet in the four quarters of the world, spoken of in verse 3, on hearing of the happy return which, at the time of this psalm being written, God had, according to His promise by Jeremiah, granted to the Jews out of Babylon.

After these the last two portions, beginning with verse 31, (in significant accordance with the course of events befalling those Jews that had returned to their own land, or should subsequently do so,) notify that their continuance therein would be contingent on their pious adherence to the law of their God : or, otherwise, that they should experience national reverses, even as before, and “wandering in the wilderness where there is no

way," verse 40, exactly as happened to them after their national rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ: and shall yet again happen to them if they be minded in any numbers to return and re-occupy, with the permission of Gentile Powers, their own land, verses 33, 34; but without belief in His word, verse 20, which He sent to heal them. See Zech. xiv. and Isa. vi. 11—13.

It is further observable, that this psalm apparently prefigures the order of the final return of the tribes, according to verse 3, from every quarter, and foretokens the principle of faith in God wherewith they shall at length be prepared to do so nationally and irreversibly.

If this sketch of the scope of this hundred and seventh psalm can be sustained, it proves it to be one of far-reaching comprehensiveness, adapted to the condition of the Jews, whether in their own land or in exile, during the whole period destined to intervene between their return from the captivity in Babylon, and their final establishment in their own land under their triumphant Messiah, "healed by His word, and sacrificing the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declaring His works with rejoicing," verse 22.

After this sublime exordium follows in the hundred and eighth, a psalm evidently compiled out of Ps. lvii. 7—11, and lx. 5—12; which, as it seems to me, was intended by the constructor of this fifth book to dove-tail, as it were, the hundred and seventh on those that should follow. Accordingly we suppose the subsequent ones to have been first collected together in their present order, whereupon the compiler perceived his collection to be in want of such a psalm as the hundred and seventh for an introduction thereto, and the hundred and eighth for the link between them.

The chequered course of Christ on earth and of the people of Christ apparently form the themes of this fifth book as of the first, and the intermediate ones. And like as elsewhere in the prophetic parts of Scripture it is to be observed that the blessings to descend on Israel are first mentioned, but the reverses are set down afterwards; as if the Seer was like a

person standing upon the brink of a precipice whence lay the vast plain outrolled before him bounded by mountains, and that he first fixed his eyes on those lofty objects farthest off—returning gradually to notice of the nearer objects; even so Seers, as it seems to me, usually first looked in vision at the glorious issue of Israel's trials in the far-off future—and then contemplated the accumulated trials to be undergone preparatory thereto. In this manner the hundred and eighth psalm treats of Israel's victories over neighbouring tribes and peoples under God's David or beloved, of whom the literal David was a type—Ps. lxxxix; while the hundred and ninth provides a psalm for contemplation from the pen of David, purely Messianic, as it would seem to me; being descriptive of what Christ alone should undergo in His own person for His people's deliverance, when, as their King, He should "go before them and fight their battles."—1 Sam. viii. 20.

Then follows in the hundred and tenth a psalm of David, also purely Messianic, referred to by our Lord Himself in Matth. xxii. 43, 44; wherein are foreshadowed, the spiritual victories gained by our Lord over the princes of this world through the purchase of the Spirit of adoption for men's renewal by His sacrificial death; and His resurrection in order to plead it before His Father in heaven, as the High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

After this follow two psalms constructed on the same model, being both acrostic; and, as it seems to me, descriptive—the former of what Christ should do for redemption of Israel in His own Person alone (verse 9); the latter, in the persons of His believing people, for their effectual establishment in what He alone had earned, that they might be "joint heirs through Him." Gal. iv. 7, and Ps. cxii. 7—10.

After this we have in the next six psalms the Great Hallel, or Song of Praise, which in all probability from the time of this book being compiled used to be sung at the Paschal Supper; as it unquestionably was at the time of our Lord becoming our Passover (1 Cor. v. 7); like as the twenty-second was subsequently sung by Him when on the cross. Compare Matt. xxvi. 30 and



xxvii. 46. We need but to think of these six psalms, as sung at that eventful supper by our Saviour Himself, to own that we have here as moving and tenderly pathetic words for contemplation as any to be found in the whole compass of Scripture! The mingled strains of triumph in dwelling on God's glory, and of heart-rending anguish when deprecating the outrage done to the Divine Majesty by our sins laid upon our Saviour, ending in the hundred and eighteenth in anticipation of His resurrection for our sakes, to make us partakers in His inheritance, to the glory of His Father, is such an outpouring of Divine love as must not only in this life, but through eternity, make tears of joy and gratitude gush forth afresh from the hearts that contemplate it.

The Great Hallel or Song of Praise is succeeded by the hundred and nineteenth psalm:—a marvellous composition—which some (with whom I agree) incline to think was written by Daniel in captivity in Babylon towards the end of his course; with the intention of depicting by a retrospect of his own eventful experience as “the man greatly beloved,” how those of his countrymen should aim at living before God, who on their return to their own land at the time predicted by Jeremiah would wish to abide in His love unto their life's end!

Then follow the psalms entitled “Songs of degrees,” or as I prefer calling them “Songs of ascension,” meaning (as I think) lifting up of the heart and mind to God in heaven. For it seems to me that during the captivity in Babylon there was especial need of authoritative warrant for such direct lifting up of the heart unto God in heaven, as enjoined in Deut. iv. 29-31.

For it is to be remembered that the Jews, from the time of the Lord having given them a place in their own land where His glory should appear (Deut. xii. 10, 11), had been authorised to turn their faces thitherward to pray unto Him; where the sacrifices, designed to foreshadow the way of reconciliation through the blood of Christ, were daily offered up. When therefore the temple, in which these sacrifices could alone be offered according to law, was destroyed and the Jews carried captive to Babylon,

it might have appeared that they were individually shut out from crying unto their God in prayer, even as they were nationally shut out from doing so in their collective capacity.

Accordingly, these psalms of ascension (some of which were composed by David and by Solomon, who occasionally testified that they lifted up their hearts unto God in the heavens and prayed—Ps. v. 3, and 1 Kings viii. 22, 23—although ordinarily turning the face towards the mercy-seat in the Temple on earth—Ps. v. 7) being, as it seems to me, authoritatively set forth for use of pious Jews in the places of worship by the river of Babylon (Ps. cxxxvii.), were, upon the compilation of this last book, placed together in the order in which we now find them, with the titles they now bear, in order to notify their distinctive character. For it is to be remembered that, agreeably with the above written exposition of the hundred and seventh psalm, it was foreseen by its composer that the Jews for their transgressions should subsequently to their happy return out of Babylon provoke national reverses in their land, verses 33, 34; and expulsion from it, verses 39, 40. So that the expatriated people of God, dwelling many days, as Hosea foresaw (ch. iii. 4), “without a king and without a prince and without a sacrifice,” might yet want the authoritative warrant furnished by these psalms with their significant titles, that the God of Abraham in cutting them off nationally from worship of Him, (which might only be with sacrifice) had not cut them off individually therefrom wherever they might be.

In support of this meaning assigned by me to the titles of these psalms it is to be observed that they all contain direct addresses to God in heaven.

They are fifteen in number, from the hundred and twentieth to the hundred and thirty-fourth inclusive.

After this follow two psalms, the hundred and thirty-fifth and sixth, which are evidently a pair: and may have been of very ancient composition.

The hundred and thirty-seventh is seen from internal evidence to have been composed by one like Ezekiel, while suffering the privations of exile in Babylon.

The hundred and thirty-eighth, ninth, fortieth, forty-first, forty-second, and forty-third, are psalms of David, to which a place appears to have been at length assigned in the book of Scripture, after having been previously used by the Temple choir, as inspired hymns, since the time of their having been written by the Royal Psalmist, and delivered to them for use in the worship of God.

The last seven may be regarded as intended to close the book with predictions of Israel's final triumph under Messiah, and praise of the Most High God through Him—as well for the wonders of Creation as of Redemption.

If this survey of the contents of the fifth book be found generally correct, it must surely be acknowledged that for loftiness of conception and sublimity in its strains it in no wise falls behind those that precede it.

## PSALM CVII.

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### ARGUMENT.

Commentators in general agree in thinking that this psalm was written about the time of the return from the Captivity in Babylon.

From the 22nd verse, where it is written

“Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,”

it may be concluded, that at the time of its being written the temple was not standing ; as also, from its words in the 7th verse,

“He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation ;”

and again at the 36th verse :

“And there He maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation”—

that Jerusalem was not then standing, but needed to be rebuilt.

This psalm was written to shew, that “God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.”—Ps. lix. 13. And it appears to have been placed at the commencement of this fifth and last book of psalms to notify the leading subject thereof: to wit, the general return of the descendants of Jacob unto their own land, after that they had repented of their unbelief and cried unto the Lord from the land of their captivity ; according as God had promised by Moses in Deut. iv. 25—31.

The repentance of those to whom should be granted by God the restoration to their own land, here held up to their longing expectation, is carefully insisted on in each of the four portions—apparently corresponding to the four quarters of the earth whence they should be redeemed—the verses to this effect being the 6th, 13th, 19th, and 28th ; after which, in the remaining portion of this psalm, from verse 31 to 43, it is intimated, that even when they shall have so returned out of Babylon, their continuance in the land of their forefathers shall only depend upon their faithful adherence to the Lord God of Israel.

Each of the portions into which the psalm is to be divided commences with an exhortation to render thanks unto God.

The first portion is from the first verse to the end of the 7th ; the second, from the 8th to the end of the 14th ; the third, from

the 15th to the end of the 20th; the fourth, from the 21st to the end of the 30th.

These four portions appear to correspond to the four quarters whence it was anticipated by the psalmist, at verse 3, that the descendants of Jacob should be moved to return. The psalmist's own fellow-captives would have come only out of the north, (Jer. i. 14, 15,) that is from Babylon. But by legends still existing in places where the Jews are to this day found it appears, that long before the captivity in Babylon, descendants of Jacob, whether Jews or Israelites, had migrated to Afghanistan eastward; and again that other colonies had settled in Lesghistan and Daghistan at the base of the Caucasian range, as also in the Crimean peninsula, and even in Spain and Bohemia, which would be westward. The ten tribes had been carried by the Assyrians northward, and the psalmist appears to have looked for the return of some among these from time to time upon their repentance, for the sake of being united again under the house of David. Ps. cxxxii. 17. Lastly, the recent researches of missionaries in Abyssinia have revealed to us the existence of Jews under the name of Falashas or strangers in that country, from a period long prior to the captivity in Babylon.

These would be they that should come from "the South;" or, as the psalmist has it, "from the sea,"—meaning the Red Sea, which is to the south of Palestine.

There can be little doubt that the psalmist in the 3rd verse had before his mind the prediction in Isaiah xliii. 3—6; and if so, he has altered יָמֵי, which signifies 'south,' and is also a name for Edom, as being south of Palestine, to יָם, "the sea;" also signifying 'south,' because of the Red Sea being south of the Holy Land. There would, as it appears to us, be a reason for this; owing to Nebuchadnezzar, in his way to Egypt, having desolated Edom some years after the captivity of the Jews was commenced in Babylon, (see Ps. cxxxvii. 7), which had not recovered therefrom; so that the return of the psalmist's countrymen from the south must be looked for further off than Edom—namely, from Abyssinia and from the interior of Africa. Now as Isaiah had in ch. xi. 15, 16, predicted a miraculous passage of the returning Israelites from the South, it appears to me that the psalmist's description in ver. 21—30 of those Israelites that were to be looked for from the 'sea' or South, pointed to those who, on hearing of God's mercy to the Jews in Babylon, being moved to repentance towards the Lord God of their fathers, should in the ordinary way encounter the perils of the sea on their return.

This manner of the Israelites' return, in the ordinary way rather than in that miraculous one in Is. xi. 15, makes me conclude that the same manner of return by Israelites from the other quarters was here contemplated by the psalmist.

Their own return out of Babylon, though in accordance with the prediction of Jeremiah (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, and Ezra i.) was accomplished in the ordinary way; as also was that by Ezra, (ch. vii. 6) eighty years afterwards; as may be seen by his words in ch. viii. 18—23 and 32. Considering, then, that this psalm, agreeably with the foregoing conjectures, was written to describe how God's protection was to be looked for in the ordinary course of His Providence by those Israelites that should repent towards Him, rather than in the miraculous way indicated in Ps. lxxvi. 5, 6, it has a special interest for us of the Gentiles who believe in Him through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; although we of the Gentiles do not share in those special promises concerning the return of penitent Israelites to their own land.

For this hundred and seventh psalm, in this former part of it, from verse 1 to 30, treats of the return of penitent Israelites from the four quarters of the earth to their own land, whensoever they may hear of God's favour being shewn to a great body of the Jews in the course of His Providence by bringing about their return thither, as He did in the days of Cyrus and the succeeding Kings of Persia; consequently it is a model for the self-regulation of Israelites at this very day; seeing that those, who returned from Babylon, provoked God to inflict upon them a further dispersion which continues even now.

Viewed in this light it is of interest to us of the Gentiles, who believe in Jesus, to observe how the God of Abraham "ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth." Ps. lix. 13; also cvii. 42, 43.

We, who are of the only remnant of the true Israelites at this present, may gather hence for our comfort, how faithful is our covenant-keeping God; how in His ordinary providential rule He bringeth His predictions concerning Israel to fulfilment: and not solely by the suspension of the laws of nature in a miraculous manner; as He will do, at the close of this age in the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xxiv. 31; Is. lx. lxxvi. 19, 20; Mal. i. 11.

According to this view of the hundred and seventh psalm, it is to be distinguished into two sections; the former extending from the 1st verse to end of the 30th; the latter from verse 31 to verse 43.

Again the former is distinguishable into four portions, corresponding with the four quarters whence the psalmist in vision contemplated, that penitent Israelites, on hearing of God's great goodness in bringing the captive Jews out of Babylon, might be moved from time to time to seek their own land either individually or in companies.

These four portions apparently describe, in the order wherein the quarters of the world are mentioned in the third verse, the special perils and distresses characterising return from each quarter.

First, the distresses of those coming from the East, as from Afghanistan, and entering the land of Palestine from the desert

on the eastern side of the Jordan, are described from the 4th verse to the end of the 7th.

Secondly, those returning from the West are described in the verses from 8 to 14, from Colchis, Pontus, Spain, and Bohemia. Their characteristic affliction appears to have been the condemnation to serve those nations amongst whom they dwelt in the extreme of comfortless oppression.

Thirdly, those returning from the North, are described from the 15th to the end of the 20th verse ; and here the psalmist more especially speaks of his fellow-captives that should come forth in penitence from beyond Babylon. Acts vii. 43. We trace in the 16th verse a reference to Isaiah's prediction in ch. xlv. 1, 2 ; and here is one of the coincidences on which the adaptation of the former part of this psalm in four portions to the four quarters of the world in verse 3 is presumed to rest. A further coincidence to the same effect is to be detected in the 20th verse, where mention is alone made of God "sending His word and healing" those that returned out of the North, or "through the gates of brass : " For this was what God actually did by Ezekiel and Daniel, (Ezek. xiii. 9) : so that there was at the end of the seventy years a sufficient number of penitent Jews in Babylon for whom God had worked the predicted deliverance by Cyrus.

Fourthly, that quarter of the world—the South—which the psalmist designated in verse 3, a return from the Sea, is appropriately made, as it seems to us, the occasion of describing what the penitent Israelites, returning out of Abyssinia or farther, should undergo from storms at sea.

The latter portion of this pathetic psalm, from verse 31 to the end, describes, as it seems to us, what it would be indispensably needful for the psalmist's fellow-countrymen on returning out of Babylon to do, in order that their continuance in their own land might be prolonged.

They were to reverently observe the Providential rule of the Most High over the seasons ; and not to think that because God had restored them to their own land, they might cultivate it in security—regardless of His will, deeming their fine climate and rich soil, and industry, all that was needed to make them prosperous.

Instead of that, they are prophetically warned by the psalmist, that if they do not wisely observe God's goodness and wonderful dealing with them in Providential ordering of their seasons—dwelling upon these topics in the congregation of the people, and in the assembly of the elders—they might provoke their God to withhold the rain and dew, indispensable for sowing and growth of their crops. They were also to know that it is He alone makes the population increase ; or the beasts of the field, on which they should in part subsist. For this strain of warning the psalmist seems to have derived his warrant from the older books of Scrip-

ture in that day, such as Deut. viii. 10—20; and Judges ii. iii. iv.

Also in what he saith in verse 41 about the Lord "setting the poor on high from affliction and making him families like a flock of sheep," he may be considered to have referred to what God did for Gideon. (Judg. vi. 11, and viii. 32.) If it should seem unlikely that the psalmist should have here referred to God's dealing with Israel so far back; it will be of advantage to observe, that in verse 40 he clearly refers to Job xii. 21—25, where occur the very words; and where it becomes plain, that by God making the rebellious inhabitants of His land to "wander in the wilderness, where there is no way," is figuratively meant, the frustration of the counsels of the powerful ones among them, so as not to know what to do for the best;—society being dissolved into its elements; and no one in sufficient authority. Ps. lxxv. 3—7.

We who live at this late stage of the Church's progress on earth see to what an extent the Jews, by slighting these warning words of the psalmist, provoked the infliction on them of wrath from God to the full end of a term fore-ordained to be inflicted if they should provoke it. 1 Thess. ii. 14—16.

Now this latter section of the hundred and seventh psalm is of direct interest to us Christians. For we in our several lands where God has settled us (Deut. xxxii. 8), being since the Apostles' days blessed with the light of revealed truth, and having the same in alliance with the Government, as God in His Providence appointed should be the privilege of His own people, are clearly under the like obligation to trace all the increase of our population or of our cattle, or of the fruits of the earth, to the direct Providence of God—and not to give place for an instant to those among us who with a great deal of learning and science would persuade us that for God to interfere with the course of the seasons, which He once established, is an impossibility.

The only issue of such profane abuse of the reasoning powers, through unbelief in revelation, is to provoke God to "pour contempt upon our princes, and cause them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way,"—by condemning us to the misery of drought and decline of population and civil dissension. When we read in the last verse the question, "Who is wise and will observe these things?" let us be minded to say with fervour, that we will—that we may receive by God's blessing grace to understand herein the loving-kindness of the Lord. For such of us as are upright, may now see by what He hath done to the Jews cause for joy herein; because of all iniquity "being compelled, if looking at what He hath done in this respect to the Jews, to stop her mouth."

# 1.

Give thanks unto Jehovah! good is He!  
Unfaintly His mercy doth endure!



So let His ransom'd ones, in spirit poor,<sup>1</sup>  
 Confess, by Him sav'd from the enemy,<sup>2</sup>  
 From divers lands brought to one company,  
 Or from the sun-rise or the shade obscure  
 Of night, or from the North, or Red Sea o'er.  
 They wander'd in their lone<sup>3</sup> way wearily,  
 Nor found one city that would yield them rest;  
 Hungry<sup>4</sup> and thirsty, faintness seized their soul:  
 Then did Jehovah, when they thus distress'd  
 Call'd on Him, of His mercy make them whole;  
 Into His upright way<sup>5</sup> their hearts He press'd,<sup>6</sup>  
 That in His city they might find their goal.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.

Let men Jehovah for His goodness praise,  
 And for His wondrous dealings with their race.  
 From souls doth He all sense of need efface—  
 Yea hungry souls feeds in His bounteous ways.  
 Those that in gloom and wildering amaze  
 Sit, bound by judgment in that piteous case,  
 Because they made light of God's promises,  
 And did rebellion 'gainst the counsel raise  
 Of the Most High: So He their hearts brought  
 down  
 With toil; nor would one help them in their fall.  
 Then they their guilt did to Jehovah own  
 And He releas'd them from their weary thrall.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 2. See verse 41, explained by Matt. v. 31; Is. lxi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 2. See Jer. xxxi. 16; Ps. viii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 4. There seems to me a marked antithesis between בִּישִׁמּוֹן דָּרָד in this verse and יִשְׁרָאֵל בְּדֶרֶךְ יְיָ in verse 7—this latter I take to be the way of justification as set forth in Ps. lxxxv. 13—the former, that way of self-justification before God charged on a school among the Israelites in Ps. xiv. 6, and by our Lord in Luke xviii. 9, and adhered to generally by Jews to this day wheresoever they are. Thus the prediction in Numb. xxiii. 9 is fulfilled, and Ps. lix. 11—14.

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 5. Is. xlix. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 7. Is. xxx. 18—26.

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 7. Acts xviii. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Ver. 7. There also seems a marked antithesis between the cities in verse 4, which would not receive the Israelites, and "His city."

Now were their galling bands asunder thrown,  
And they brought out from under death's dark pall.

## 3.

Praise to Jehovah for His goodness give !  
For all His wondrous dealings with our race.  
For He did burst sheer<sup>8</sup> through the gates of brass  
And bars of iron did asunder rive.  
Fools, for their wantonness,<sup>9</sup> in trouble live—  
For all their hardihood in wickedness.  
Depriv'd of healthful vigour thro' excess,  
No dish to tempt their soul can they contrive,  
And to the very gates of death draw near.  
Then to Jehovah in their strait they cry  
And He delivers them from all their fear :  
His prophets sent He, that should testify  
How good His word, and heal'd those that would  
hear,  
Relieving them from their sore misery.

## 4.

Oh for His goodness give Jehovah praise,  
For all His wondrous dealings with mankind.  
Into His presence bring a thankful mind  
For sacrifice, and laud Him in His ways.  
They that in ships<sup>1</sup> at sea employ their days  
And trade, dread tokens of Jehovah find :  
For at His word up springs the stormy wind,  
To lift its waves and scatter high their sprays,  
Or sink them to th' abyss ; while to and fro,  
As drunken men, the stagg'ring sailors reel.

<sup>8</sup> As it appears to me that Babylon shall be rebuilt, this is in anticipation of what shall happen at a future day. Compare Ps. cxxxvii. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ver. 17. Compare Jer. xxix. 4—7 with 19—32.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 23. The expression "do business in great waters" points to more than mere voyagers. So that it seems to me in this psalm, while the special dangers characterising each quarter whence Israelites shall be gathered at the Lord's coming again are primarily described, sundry ways are in each quarter indicated wherein the elect among them of each generation shall in the interim be turned unto God.

Then crave they of Jehovah in their woe  
Compassion, Who their troubled hearts doth heal.  
Snatch'd from the storm, in calm they onward go  
Till in the wish'd-for port they moor their keel.

## 5.

Jehovah's goodness praise, ye sons of men—  
His works in our behalf of providence ;  
Tell in the Church's midst His excellence ;  
Let elders in th' assembly swell that strain.  
He doth a land of all its water drain,  
To drought consigning meads well water'd once.  
The ground, erst fruitful, no more sustenance  
Yields, for the sins of them that dwell therein.  
Or He the barren turns to fruitful soil,  
Causing springs in the desert forth to well ;  
And makes the hungry there in plenty dwell,  
That they a city, for pursuit of toil  
In safety, may prepare ; and buy and sell  
The increase of their lands—their rural spoil.

## 6.

Themselves too doth He cause to multiply,  
And, after their increase, the herds t' increase ;  
Or in reverse-wise, lo ! their good days cease,  
Thro' feuds, misgovernment and misery.  
Then on their princes' pomp and chivalry  
He pours contempt ; and forces them thro' stress  
Of hindrances to pause in helplessness  
Bewilder'd ; yet from out those contraries  
In will and principle, He sets on high  
His poor one to control their destinies,  
And makes, e'en like a flock, his family.  
Who then will these His works weigh, as the wise ?  
Jehovah's providence they'll magnify,  
And rev'rently His loving-kindness prize !

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## PSALM CVIII.

## TITLE.

A song—a psalm—for the beloved.

## ARGUMENT.

This psalm was composed in all probability after the return from Babylon.

It consists of extracts from two earlier psalms which are undoubtedly David's.

The first five verses being taken from the close of the fifty-seventh psalm, composed on David's escape from Saul, when hidden in the sides of the cave where Saul, who was in pursuit of him, lay down to sleep—a psalm which has by the Christian Fathers been taken to depict allegorically the hiding of Christ in the grave; which issued in His breaking forth at His resurrection-morn with the avowal of a purpose to proclaim the “mercy and truth” of God among peoples and nations.

Again, the latter part of this hundred and eighth psalm, from verse 6 to the end, is taken from the sixtieth; in which David commemorates his victories over the confederate forces of Syria and Moab; taking them for foretokens of absolute ascendancy over the whole of them on the part of His expected Son and Lord.

A psalm so composed out of two that were old in the days of Zerubbabel is not without its significance, if interpreted according to the rule introduced by St. Paul in Rom. xv. 9—12 for the purpose of combatting the prejudices of his fellow-converts from among the Jews, concerning worship along with converts from out of the Gentiles in the same city. From the quotations there made by him out of the Scriptures he shews that the conversion of the Gentiles by whole nations, as intimated in verse 3 of this psalm, (before that of their own nation was hinted at) should take place at the coming of the Messiah; even as we at this late stage of our age see to have happened.

St. Paul further gives in that passage a remarkable explanation of the significance wherewith it is testified in the 4th verse of this psalm—

“Thy mercy is great above the heavens,  
And Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.”

At the 8th and 9th verses of that fifteenth of Romans, St. Paul wrote: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the ‘truth’ of God, and that the Gentiles should glorify God for His ‘mercy.’” This testimony prompts us to think how “the truth” of God is magnified, by having sent His

Son to be born of David's line, so soon as the fulness of the time had come; notwithstanding that He knew the Jews to be, through the traditions of their Rabbis, bitterly opposed to His Gospel: and further foreknew that they would nationally reject the Gospel when preached to them first after His Son's resurrection.

By that "truth of God" in adhering to His promise, we Gentiles became recipients of God's unlooked for "mercy." (Rom. xi. 31.)

For the Lord Jesus bade His Apostles, after first preaching His Gospel to the Jews, if they as a nation rejected it, forthwith turn to the Gentiles. (Acts xiii. 46, 47.)

Thus the Apostle in that part of Rom. xv. authoritatively teaches us how to interpret the fourth verse of this psalm.

Again, as to the 3rd verse, since it has been already observed that the Apostolic Fathers reckoned David in the fifty-seventh psalm to have described (though himself unconscious of that mystical reference) Christ's mind towards His Father when rising from the grave; this is the best sense in which to take these first five verses of the psalm before us.

They are therefore to be regarded by us as words which Christ should use by means of His mystical members, when the time should come for His resurrection from the dead, and His commissioning of His Apostles to go forth from Jerusalem preaching the good word of His grace to the Jew first and afterwards to the Gentile.

The Gospel is only preached with power where Christ's Spirit animates the messengers: His Spirit makes them to be of one mind as to fundamental doctrines in every country and generation of this kingdom of heaven; even as the Spirit of Christ preserves this consistency with itself throughout the Scriptures from Genesis to the Revelation: whereto also there is borne testimony in the Athanasian Creed, when it is said—

"For like as we are compelled by the Christian Verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord: So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion (that is the Revelation in Scripture from the beginning of Genesis) to say that there be three Gods or three Lords."

Our Saviour's own method of inculcating the same truth is by representing one servant alone (according to Luke's account of the parable of the marriage supper, xiv. 16,) as going forth throughout the whole of these times of the Gentiles to bring in guests to the seats left vacant at God's sacrificial table by them that were bidden.

That one servant is Jesus Himself, who by His Spirit has gone forth, and continues to go forth in the persons of His faithful ministers on that errand.

Agreeably herewith, St. Paul, in Ephes. ii. 17, wrote that Christ "came and preached peace" to them at Ephesus—namely

the Gentiles, "which were far off," as well as to them—Paul's fellow-countrymen, "who were nigh," because of being already enrolled by sacramental title in the family of God.

Now precisely after the same manner in which St. Paul said that Christ came and preached peace by his mouth, and that of other faithful messengers of His Gospel to the Ephesians, did the compilers of this psalm, throughout its verses assume that Christ would by means of their nation perform what He here foretells.

In this devout and enthusiastic spirit they, by means of the first five verses of this psalm, professed readiness to yield themselves unto Christ for the conversion of the nations.

But alas! when the fulness of the time came for God to send forth the rod of Christ's power out of Zion, only a small remnant of their nation (which God had by sovereign election reserved for His Son) were found ready under the actual circumstances to do, what in the abstract the religious Jews in general had been in the habit of professing their readiness to enter on.

Here it behoves us to observe, how we at this present regard this psalm as given us to use, because of being through faith in Jesus the only remnant of the true Israelites.

How then are we behaving under the actual circumstances in which we are placed as regards this solicitation of Gentiles to praise God in Christ? Are not very many of our nation forgetting their baptismal obligations on this subject altogether?

Would so comparatively small a portion of the yearly increase on our nation's substance find its way into the coffers of all our missionary societies put together, if the nation at large was animated with the spirit breathing through the first five verses of this psalm?

Again, are not others among us so led away by the traditions of doctors in the Church, exactly after the manner of the Jewish Rabbis in our Lord's time, that in their zeal for their Hierarchy they are disregarding that indispensable requisite for all faithful discharge of this errand; namely, that they yield themselves to Christ's Spirit to preach by their tongues and lives? Except they take His word and that alone He will not be with them: in which case instead of singing the praises of God and of Christ among the nations, they would only spread the traditional customs of unscriptural Churches. The ministers of our reformed Church, if faithful to their solemn engagements, would yield themselves to Christ for the promulgation of His pure gospel, not only among their own countrymen, but among their fellow-subjects in the colonies, and fellow-men in other parts of the earth.

Are we then taking part in the work of missions by contributing to it out of our substance, as the Lord hath blessed us?

Only in that case can we look upon ourselves as consistently taking upon our lips the first five verses of this psalm.

Be this as it may, the Scriptures of the New Testament warn us, that there shall be a decline from this pure preaching of the Gospel by missionaries abroad, (Matt. xxiv. 12) because of love for the truth declining at home. (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.)

It therefore behoves us who know how the word of Christ is alone able through God to build men up and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified (Acts xx. 32) to be the more watchful over ourselves, lest we decline in love of the Holy Scriptures, which contain the only means of extending the saving knowledge of God's mercy and truth.

The latter part of this psalm, from verse 6 to the end, being taken from the sixtieth psalm is predictive of what Christ will do in the person of some chosen ruler over His ancient people for the re-apportionment of the promised land, as set forth in Ezek. xlv. 1—8, when "His beloved ones shall have been delivered," according to verse 6. See also Isa. xxv. 10,

As the Church of Christ advances on her way to the final consummation of all things, the counsel of God, in supplying her by inspired penmen with divers portions of His foreknowledge concerning events that shall in due time come to pass, becomes apparent.

At first, when this psalm was compiled, (in the days, as it is thought, of Zerubbabel) none of the Jews could have anticipated, that they as a nation should for many generations fall into abeyance as regards this evangelisation of the nations; while Gentiles, converted in the first instance by a small remnant of Jews (whom God elected thereto out of regard for His truth), should for the most part be the confessors of Christ's name on earth, to the shutting out from notice the comparatively few Jews who do the like.

Now again, the great bulk of us Christians from among the Gentiles, (especially where the ministers of Christ implicitly follow the traditions of their doctors to the neglect of God's inspired word) may be wholly unaware of God's declared purpose to punish the Churches out of the Gentiles, that hold not fast the word of Christ in its purity. But this it is written in Rom. xi. 22—32, that He will do, by returning to a remnant of His ancient people through whom to accomplish on this earth all the good that He hath provided for the nations in Christ—a subject also referred to in Ps. cxlix. 5—9. Nevertheless, we of the Gentiles will then have only more cause than ever to glorify God for His mercy, Rom. xi. 15.

Let us then, who are of this first election from out of the Gentiles, through His mercy (Rom. xi. 30, and Ephes. iii. 1—6) with gratitude to God concern ourselves about dissemination of His blessed Gospel among all people to the glory of His name and the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ more and more in the hearts of those whom He at so great a cost redeemed, agreeably with verses 3 and 4 of the psalm before us.

## 1.

Thee with my heart, O God, I'll praise!  
 Yea, with the glory of man's race—  
     The tongue—Thy name I'll celebrate!  
 The nations to this theme I'll call,  
 Jehovah, and invite them all  
     Upon Thy works to meditate!

## 2.

As heav'n o'er earth is lifted high,  
 So soars Thy mercy! o'er the sky  
     Itself too, doth Thy truth ascend!  
 Through heaven let angels tell Thy worth!  
 And men Thy glory o'er the earth,  
     O God, be telling without end!

## 3.

That Thy belov'd ones rescu'd be  
 With Thy right hand, O hear Thou me!  
     Lo! in His Holy One<sup>1</sup> God's voice  
 Has answer'd! now to part the land  
 Of Shechem 'mongst our brethren, and  
     The vale of Succoth, I'll rejoice.

## 4.

Manasseh's mine—mine Gilead—  
 And Ephraim's my kingdom's head.  
     From Judah I derive my laws.  
 Moab I'll as an outcast treat—  
 Edom I'll tread beneath my feet—  
     Philistia I'll control by force.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 17. בִּקְדֹשׁוֹ is by Bishop Horne so translated.



## 5.

Who'll me into the city bring  
 Of Edom? Won't Thou, Who didst fling  
 Our hosts down into slavery?  
 Be Thou our Helper! for in vain  
 Doth man save!—we'll, thro' Thee, again  
 Tread in the dust each enemy.

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## PSALM CIX.

## TITLE.

To the chief Musician. A psalm of David.

## ARGUMENT.

It seems to me, that when the place occupied by this psalm in the book before us is duly weighed, there can be no doubt about the compiler's application of it to Messiah. It is generally agreed that the compiler took in hand the arrangement of this book after the Jews' return from captivity in Babylon.

But at that time the compiler was made aware by revelation from God to Daniel (ix. 26), that in the 486th year counted from the expiration of the seventy years to be spent in Babylon, Messiah should be cut off in Jerusalem.

What people should perpetrate this atrocious sacrilege did not appear; but the prime care of the compiler of this book seems to have been to warn his own nation of the guilt that would be contracted by such a deed. The compiler accordingly commenced this book at the hundred and seventh psalm with a singularly pathetic entreaty of his nation to praise God for his goodness. After which, in the hundred and eighth, he set forth in a psalm framed out of two in a former book (Ps. lvii. and lx) mention of that supremacy over the kingdoms of this world, which it had been revealed to Daniel in chap. vii. 27 should, in the days of the triumphant Messiah, be granted unto Israel.

Then follows this hundred and ninth psalm, which seems to me to be purely Messianic, and not to have referred to David himself; for there never was a time in his life in which he could describe himself before God in the terms used by him at ver. 32

of this psalm, saying, "I am poor and needy," or in other words, of a meek spirit, and altogether dependent on others for daily maintenance.

But we contend that in this psalm David was led by the Spirit of Christ to speak in pathetic terms of the suffering Messiah. Here then is to be seen the propriety of its place in this book, immediately following upon a psalm treating of the triumphant Messiah. After this, in the hundred and tenth, follows a psalm emphatically setting forth the Divine nature of Messiah in union with His human, and predicting the great spread of His power in the hearts of men by the preaching of the gospel of peace through His humiliation of Himself.

After this come two psalms,—the hundred and eleventh and hundred and twelfth, remarkable counterparts to each other, as well in regard to their structure as to their subjects; the former, as it seems to me, containing a descant on the Messiah in His own person working out the redemption of Israel; the latter, on the Messiah working out in the persons of His believing people their appropriation of His redemption. (Isa. xxvi. 12.)

Then follow the five psalms of the greater Hallel, which from the time of the return out of Babylon was sung at the Paschal supper.

Wherefore, in viewing this arrangement, all I can say is, that if the compiler of this book did not discern how the cutting off of Messiah (predicted, as we have already shewn, in Dan. ix. 26) was mysteriously foretold in the feast of the Passover, when Israel was redeemed out of Egyptian bondage, according to Ps. xc., then the Spirit of God guided the compiler without his own consciousness unto so significant an appointment of the greater Hallel to be sung at that feast; and likewise to make the hundred and ninth introductory thereto.

Also the hundred and nineteenth (supposed to have been written by Daniel, and to have been descriptive of the sufferings of Christ, and of the people of Christ) was by the Holy Spirit's prompting made to be the sequel of so high a theme. Contemplation of the hundred and ninth psalm in this connection will surely furnish evidence of the spirit in which the imprecations herein from verses 6 to 19, inclusive, were understood by the compiler. For we may safely conclude that the compiler placed this psalm where it stands for the sake of its imprecations. Nor will it be unwarrantable on our part to conclude further, that he used the imprecations in this psalm for the purpose I am about to mention, because of his persuasion that such was the normal use of them—the purpose of David himself, or rather the Holy Spirit that guided David in penning the terms of these imprecations. Supposing, as we have a right to do, that the compiler of this book, believing what had been revealed to Daniel concerning the cutting off of Messiah in Jerusalem in the 486th year after the expiration of the seventy years in Babylon, hoped

by appointment of this book of psalms for constant use in the public service to pre-occupy the minds of his own nation with dread of any participation in so impious an act; may we not conclude, that he regarded these imprecations of Divine wrath on such malefactor, or malefactors, the most effectual way under God of deterring his own people (especially the priesthood in whose custody were the psalms,) from such craft and guile towards any "poor and needy" fellow Israelite; or especially one who should know himself to be in the capacity of an office-bearer or overseer, under a fellow-Israelite "poor and needy;" and above all one who, out of his own mouth, might be proved to be at the very time taking that poor and needy Israelite, under whom he was an office-bearer, for his Messiah?

I say it would be impossible to conceive means that would before-hand appear better fitted, than were these imprecations, to deter men from guilty participation in the cutting off of Messiah, without knowing what they did, though well knowing (which was bad enough) that they were by subornation of false witnesses and guile and bribery cutting off a poor and needy fellow-Israelite. What then becomes of the offence taken at these imprecations? Acts i. 16—20. It is evidently founded on a misconception of the aim and effect of their normal use.

Offence at these imprecations would involve one in impatience at all denunciations whatever before-hand of woe in men's ears for any act they might have a mind to do. See Matth. xxiii. What is woe, when explicitly opened out, but the particulars detailed in these imprecations?

Considering too that the original author of these imprecations and the pious rehearsers of them only asked God to give them effect, Who is the Fountain of Justice, there could be no possibility of mal-versation or mal-administration of them.

And it has been already shewn, that the intention of the compiler who appointed them to be recited was in the highest degree charitable towards his fellow-countrymen, whom he would thereby deter from so great a sin.

The certainty that Messiah was to be cut off in the midst of Israel made it the more important, as the compiler of this book of psalms would think, to bring prominently forward this solemn warning of his countrymen against inadvertent entanglement in such awful impiety. From the 27th verse it is plain that this cutting off of Messiah was to be in one sense the will of God (see Isa. liii. 10); which only made it the more important that the hands which accomplished it should not be "wicked" (see Acts ii. 23). For God does not need man's sin in order to accomplish His will!

Well then might the psalmist fear, that like as Joseph (Gen. xlv. 5—8) said that God had sent him before his brethren

to preserve life—ignoring their guilt by which that purpose of God was brought about, not to please Him but themselves—so might it be with his countrymen in the case of Messiah; unless they took care it should not so happen. God might deliver Him by His determinate counsel and foreknowledge, yet they that took Him, do so “with wicked hands.”—Acts ii. 23.

If this exposition be correct, these imprecations were never used for protection of any other person than one: and consequently the cause for them has passed away never to recur.

The enormity of the guilt that would be incurred by him or them who would be in a likely condition to run into it, would justify the recital beforehand of so awful and bitter a catalogue of execrations—which it is to be observed were expressly directed, in general terms, against certain modes of dealing, and deeds; so that no one need incur them, who did not by his deliberate wickedness against the poor and needy bring them on his own head. These imprecations were not written for the gratification of David’s vengeance after actual injury had by a person known to him been inflicted. Far otherwise. They were uttered with the charitable intention of deterring any in Israel from deeds of a stamp to provoke the infliction of these curses by the holy God.

## 1.

God of my praise! O hold not Thou Thy peace!

The wicked and deceitful 'gainst me speak  
With lying tongues; in hatred they increase,  
And without cause their malice on me wreak.

## 2.

In answer to my love they 'gainst me fight;

But I the while betake myself to prayer.  
My services with insults they requite,  
And for my love against me hatred bear.

## 3.

A wicked one do Thou set him to flout,  
Yea, too, at his right hand let Satan be;  
At time of trial, doom'd let him go out  
And let his prayer become iniquity.

## PSALM CX.

## TITLE.

A psalm of David.

Our Lord, in Matth. xxii. 43, confirms the testimony of this title; and the silence to which the Pharisees were reduced by our Lord's question out of this psalm, shews that in His time its mention of "my Lord" was unanimously interpreted of Messiah.

## ARGUMENT.

Under the name of the "rod of Thy power" is predicted the progress of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, when sent out of Zion on that day of Pentecost next after His Ascension up to the right hand of God the Father. Compare 1 Kings ii. 19. His posture of sitting denoted His Personal refrainment from direct efforts for the ascendancy of His Gospel (compare Luke xxii. 35-7), which is to be changed for active intervention on earth (which is implied in the word 'till'); so soon as His Father shall have sent Him forth; which will be, when the iniquity of the nations among whom His Gospel shall have been preached, shall have come to the full. (Matth. xxiv. 12; Luke xxi. 24, compared with Gen. xv. 16 and Deut. ix. 5.)

By Romans v. 6, may be seen wherein doth consist the strength of His rod. (Compare Rev. iii. 8.)

The manner wherein the Gospel has won its way against the mightiest opposition that could at any time be brought against it by enemies, with "weapons that are not carnal, but mighty through God" (2 Cor. x. 4), is a fact which cannot be denied, howsoever the enmity of man's heart may chafe thereat; and is an incontestable pledge of the rest that is predicted in this psalm concerning Messiah being in God's own times (1 Tim. vi. 13-16) fulfilled likewise.

"If a man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His," saith St. Paul in Rom. viii. 9; so that His mystical members are a people of "willing devotedness, in the beauties of holiness."

"The dew of His youth"—or young offspring—being above "that of the womb of the morning;" agreeably wherewith Peter compares young converts to "new born babes." (1 Pet. ii. 2.)

Bp. Horsley observes, that among Greek writers dew seems to have been a figurative name for the young of an animal; *δρόσος* being used in *Æsch. Agamem.* 145, for an unfledged bird, and *ἄρον* in *Hom. Od. i.* 222. for a young lamb, or kid.

But here is an appropriateness in David's use of this term which is unrivalled.

For as dew is from heaven and refreshes the earth, and is countless, and comes of the morning, so are the people of Messiah born of God for the healing of society—and innumerable—and the offspring of that light which shall eventually drive darkness away from before it.

The testimony in verse 4 is referred to in Heb. i. 6, where the translation of the Septuagint is sanctioned, which varies from the Hebrew original. Here are the words :

“Thou art a priest for ever, according to  
My word, O Melchisedec!” or King of righteousness.

While there it is :

“According to the order of Melchisedec.”

This latter will be compatible with the former, if we suppose the Septuagint doctors to have received by tradition, that Melchisedec was so declared Priest and King by an audible voice from heaven ; and further, that such designation of him to those offices was intended to typify the manner of Messiah's ordination thereto. It is obvious that by this free translation of “according to My word” by “according to the order” the Septuagint doctors applied this psalm to Messiah. St. Paul's inspired comment hereon in Heb. v. 5—13 is to the same effect. Agreeably herewith it is recorded in Matth. iii. 17, that Jesus was ordained to be a Prophet, like unto Moses, with the words from heaven : “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased ;” and in Matth. xvii. 5 to be a Priest, by the words : “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased ; hear Him !” and in Heb. v. 5 to be a High priest, by Him that said unto Him : “Thou art My Son ; this day have I begotten Thee !” (Acts xiii. 33.)

Between a priest and a high priest there appears to be no other distinction than that of consecration ; not of ordination ; as Bonar observes on Levit. iv. 3, page 56, where he is designated “the priest that is anointed”—for he alone was so.

Agreeably wherewith it is instructive to observe in our Church's Prayer Book how we have an office for “ordering of Deacons and Priests,” but of “consecration of Bishops.”

In verse 5 the Psalmist, addressing Jehovah, speaks of his Lord ; saying, “The Lord”—above called my Lord—“at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath ;” wherewith compare Ps. ii. 8—12 ; Rev. ii. 26.

The last verse refers to the sorrows which should first overtake Messiah in His mortal body.

“The brook in the way” would seem to be the help appointed of God for Him, as a Man, which He would meekly receive, thereby proving Himself to be no “proud worker” (Ps. xxxi. 23) ; but One, that feared His Father (Heb. v. 7), as was exemplified

in His last agony (Luke xxii. 44), when there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening the human nature, which would else have failed. (Ps. xxii. 19; Is. lvii. 16.) He did not decline this help, as though acceptance of it would detract from His glory; and for this humbling of Himself under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. v. 6.) His Father hath highly exalted Him, as a Man. (Phil. ii. 9.)

## 1.

Jehovah, to my Lord thus spake:

“Sit thou at My right hand,

“Until I those Thy footstool make

“That Thy just claims withstand.

## 2.

“From out of Zion Thy strong rod

“Forth shall Jehovah send:

“Amid Thy foes do Thou for God

“Successfully contend!

## 3.

“A host made willing in Thy pow’r—

“Adorn’d with holiness—

“Shall serve Thee; like the dewy shower

“Of morning—numberless!

## 4.

“Beyond all change, Jehovah’s oath

“For ever Thee decrees

“To be His Priest by word of mouth,

“O King of Righteousness!”

## 5.

The Lord at Thy right hand shall kill

Kings in His day of wrath—

Shall judge the heathen—and shall fill

With carcasses His path!

## 6.

The head that o'er much earth bears sway  
He'll crush: but His bow'd head,  
Which drinks of that brook in His way,  
Shall He lift up instead.

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## PSALM CXI.

—  
ARGUMENT.

No other word so fully serves as that of "redemption" in verse 6, to sum up the benefits brought us by God's sending of the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

That this is what is treated of in verse 6, is plain, from its being declared to be a redemption of God's people by a covenant which He hath commanded for ever. Now, redemption means liberation from under some bondage by buying of persons out from under it.

God, indeed, did this for Israel on divers occasions, in regard to the nations which temporarily usurped sway over them: agreeably wherewith we find Isaiah, in ch. xliii. 3, testifying in the Name of God, "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Æthiopia and Seba for thee."

Yet the effects of that redemption of Israel did not prevent them from being sold by God for their sins into slavery under the nations of Canaan.

But in the 6th verse it is said that the redemption spoken of is commanded by God to be in its effects everlasting; which is not true of any other redemption than that granted by God in Christ.

Moreover, St. Paul, in Gal. iv. 4, expressly sums up in this word "redemption" what Christ was sent to do for us.

"For when," saith he, "the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Compare herewith Luke i. 68, ii. 34.

From a general survey of the Holy Scriptures we learn, that before the creation of a single intelligent and moral being, there had been concluded between the Father and the Son in heaven "a covenant," that the Son should take the nature of the lower



of those intelligent creatures, namely, men ; and in that nature furnish all of either section with an example of the extent to which duty is due from the creature to the Creator ; namely, to that of bearing evil in the sense of affliction, even to the laying down of life at the desire of Him Who gave it, without question of the Creator's goodness in demanding it.

There was great mercy on God's part in not requiring a mere creature to shew this example ; and indeed it is not consistent with what Scripture shews to be the perfection of the Divine Nature, that He should have done so ; for it would have argued, that the Creator looked for a suitable exemplification of the duty due to Him in a creature—a being distinct from Himself.

This would have been derogatory to Him. For "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things," as Scripture testifies.

Hence, by Christ being called, in the Book of Revelation, "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world," it is meant, He was destined so to be before any intelligent moral being was created. (Rev. xiii. 8, 1 Pet. i. 20.)

It is plain, therefore, that even if there had never been sin in heaven or earth, the Lamb of God would have died a sacrificial death, whereby a "covenant" or agreement between two contracting parties is found in Scripture to be sealed.

But if happily there had been no sin in heaven or earth, there would have been no need of "redemption ;" for nowhere would there have been bondage. The sacrificial death of the Lamb of God would in that case have only been an act to be "seen," (1 Tim. iii. 16) or contemplated ; just as Isaac's readiness to have been made one at his father Abraham's instance and God's command, might also have been, had it been permitted by God to be carried into effect.

As an example of unreserved un murmuring compliance with the Creator's will at any cost soever of pain to the creature, with the worthy thought, that it could only be for the ultimate good of the creature to comply with the Creator's requirement, the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God in our nature on this earth, would have moved un sinning men to enquire into the mystery of it, as it now does the un sinning angels. (1 Pet. i. 12.)

And thus men would have been prepared in innocence for translation to God's rest through incorporation with Christ—the Archetypal man, when the time had come for entry on that Sab-batical state.

But alas ! sin insinuated itself into heaven, causing one of the chief princes of the angels to decline from the truth and leave his first estate. (John viii. 44.) What then, if evil in the sense of affliction beheld by this Prince of Angels in geological ages among beasts on earth was the cause with him of doubt whether those beings could have been so made by God ?

Thus evil, (in the sense of affliction as it comes from God,)

would become evil in the sense of sin, by Satan's making it such through unbelief.

Be this as it may, the rebellious prince of angels by-and-bye, on God's placing Adam and Eve in paradise on earth, seduced the woman into sin : whereupon the man through unwillingness to be separated from her whom God had given him for his companion, knowingly shared in her disobedience, that he might at least share with his wife the bondage from which he could not redeem her. For, according to the principles of righteousness implanted in Adam's conscience by nature, he knew that each person must answer for his own acts, and those alone ; it being quite out of the question, that good deeds could be rendered by him beyond what might be required from himself to make amends for his wife's rebellion : since the worthiness of God demanded from him for himself alone all the devotedness which he could render.

He must therefore lose her or cast in his lot with her. He chose the latter, being in this a type of Christ—the Archetypal man—so far as concerned love for his wife, to the extent of giving himself for her ; but not in respect of incurring sin against God by loving his wife more than God : for Christ—the Archetypal man—in loving His wife and giving Himself for her, loved His God more. Ephes. v. 25.

For God had out of foreknowledge provided in the primeval "covenant" already referred to between the Father and the Son, a scheme whereby, in case there should arise sin in heaven and that it should extend to earth, by woman yielding to the tempter's glozing speech, (which in fact happened) the sacrificial death, which the Lamb of God had covenanted to render for upholding the attributes of the Creator in the conception of the creature in a sinless world, might equally suffice for "redemption" of those whom it pleased God to save from out of a sinning one.

Here was to be seen the foreknowledge and wisdom of God in making intelligent moral creatures of two orders—angels and men—one higher, and with greater advantages than the other for knowing His goodness.

The angels which fell not (which the Scripture indicates to have been elect unto that constancy, for all things are of God, 1 Tim. v. 21) might profit by only "seeing" the example of Christ's sacrificial death (1 Tim. iii. 16) ; but the non-elect ones, who became devils, could not by only "seeing" that example of Christ imitate Him in self-surrender to God, and recover themselves unto righteousness. They needed a Redeemer—a Divine Redeemer—to bring them strength to do this, when they should repent and ask for it.

But the delights of the Son of God were with the sons of men from before the foundation of the world, Prov. viii. 31. It had been in covenant agreed that He should take the nature of man,

of those intelligent creatures, namely, men ; and in that nature furnish all of either section with an example of the extent to which duty is due from the creature to the Creator ; namely, to that of bearing evil in the sense of affliction, even to the laying down of life at the desire of Him Who gave it, without question of the Creator's goodness in demanding it.

There was great mercy on God's part in not requiring a mere creature to shew this example ; and indeed it is not consistent with what Scripture shews to be the perfection of the Divine Nature, that He should have done so ; for it would have argued, that the Creator looked for a suitable exemplification of the duty due to Him in a creature—a being distinct from Himself.

This would have been derogatory to Him. For "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things," as Scripture testifies.

Hence, by Christ being called, in the Book of Revelation, "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world," it is meant, He was destined so to be before any intelligent moral being was created. (Rev. xiii. 8, 1 Pet. i. 20.)

It is plain, therefore, that even if there had never been sin in heaven or earth, the Lamb of God would have died a sacrificial death, whereby a "covenant" or agreement between two contracting parties is found in Scripture to be sealed.

But if happily there had been no sin in heaven or earth, there would have been no need of "redemption ;" for nowhere would there have been bondage. The sacrificial death of the Lamb of God would in that case have only been an act to be "seen," (1 Tim. iii. 16) or contemplated ; just as Isaac's readiness to have been made one at his father Abraham's instance and God's command, might also have been, had it been permitted by God to be carried into effect.

As an example of unreserved un murmuring compliance with the Creator's will at any cost soever of pain to the creature, with the worthy thought, that it could only be for the ultimate good of the creature to comply with the Creator's requirement, the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God in our nature on this earth, would have moved un sinning men to enquire into the mystery of it, as it now does the un sinning angels. (1 Pet. i. 12.)

And thus men would have been prepared in innocence for translation to God's rest through incorporation with Christ—the Archetypal man, when the time had come for entry on that Sabbath state.

But alas ! sin insinuated itself into heaven, causing one of the chief princes of the angels to decline from the truth and leave his first estate. (John viii. 44.) What then, if evil in the sense of affliction beheld by this Prince of Angels in geological ages among beasts on earth was the cause with him of doubt whether those beings could have been so made by God ?

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would become evil in the sense of sin, by Satan's making it such through unbelief.

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But the delights of the Son of God were with the sons of men from before the foundation of the world, Prov. viii. 31. It had been in covenant agreed that He should take the nature of man,

to effectually recover (if necessary) from a lost state by nature the elect, that God had among them, equally as among the angels before the foundation of the world.

Thus election among angels and men was appointed by God for vindication of this truth : to wit, that all things true and good are of Him ; with this only difference, that whereas it might not have been declared beforehand among the angels that some were elect and others not, until the non-elect had fallen : when they had so, and the proclamation of election as vindicating God from disappointment in creation of them was made known, it may be supposed to have been met by the rebels with a sneer.

Then had come the fulness of the time for introduction of the other half of this scheme of election, by bringing it into operation on earth, where the elect from among men should be (with the knowledge of Satan and his angels) permitted to fall equally with the non-elect through his malice ; and yet, in spite of all he and his should do to keep them, when fallen away, from recovery to God in Christ, he should not succeed in a single instance : so that this contest should be for the vindication at God's final judgment of His transcendent majesty.

Thus is apparent wherefore the Lamb of God took not on Him the nature of angels, but took on Him the seed of Abraham. (Heb. ii. 16.) It is also hence apparent, that like as God left the angels that sinned without redemption, it would have been equally consistent with justice to have left men also.

But since angels had sinned against greater light, it pleased God, as being more consistent with His goodness, to redeem sinful men.

Now it is not unlikely, that had neither angel or man ever sinned, the Lord Jesus, when sent by His Father to be the Lamb of God, would have come on earth in our nature in full maturity of manhood ; since He oftentimes so appeared on earth, as recorded in Scripture, prior to His being sent in the fulness of time to work out redemption.

But had He so come, He would not have given us the proof He now has of being made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. (Heb. iv. 15.)

Who now can describe the condescension of God in stooping on our account, for our better persuasion of His being made like unto us, to come in our nature after the same manner in which ordinary infants do ?

It is hence clear how sin caused the Lamb of God to undergo His sacrificial death in a body that was born of woman, that He might thereby work out redemption for us.

When we think of the condescension implied in stooping, for the Father's sake, to dwell in the dark and straitened cell of His Virgin Mother's womb for nine months ere His birth, we may see the propriety of those words in the Te Deum — the work of

ambrose of Milan, "When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's Womb!"

This aggravation of the Saviour's undertaking to set an example of the duty due from the creature to the Creator, which the primeval covenant admitted of, is indeed a stupendous evidence of God's love for His creatures; shewing the appropriateness of the Psalmist's testimony on this head, from the second to the end of the eighth verse. His Virgin Mother, through the faith wherewith she received the message from God by Gabriel concerning the intention to make her the Mother of Messiah "received strength to conceive" Him in her womb (Heb. xi. 11); wherefore, by the voice of Elisabeth, the Holy Ghost said, "Blessed is she that believed" (Luke i. 45); and the Holy Ghost by the Virgin Mother's own mouth said, "All generations shall call me blessed," verse 48.

Assuredly we, who value this redemption, which came in one respect through her faith, will not fail to render her this due honour, though abominating that idolatry which superstitious Christians insist on as her due.

The amazing condescension to be seen in the Word of God dwelling for nine months in His mother's womb, was followed by the equally amazing endurance of the feebleness and discomforts of infancy—the slow improvement of childhood in body and mind—the eighteen years of humble employment as a wheelwright or carpenter, until at thirty years of age, for two and a half years, He discharged His errand as a Prophet under the law; and being found perfect, yielded up His life of His own free will (John x. 17, 18) a sacrifice for the redemption of all mankind, by occasion of wicked men, Jews and Gentiles, at Satan's instigation in the first instance, but afterwards in spite of his endeavours to prevent it (Matth. xxvii. 10), nailing Him to the accursed tree of the cross.

The instant that He had commended His spirit into His Father's hands, His Father secretly signified His acceptance of the sacrifice by changing Him from natural to spiritual manhood, making His soul a quickening spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45). On this account those that believe in Him by feeding on His sacrificial flesh and blood are incorporated with Him; so as to be with Him brought out (as He Himself was by death) from under the curse of the law; and so long as they remain buried by the Holy Ghost into His death, they are made partakers in all that He hath—having Him for their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). For we are complete in Him (Col. ii. 10).

Truly here is a covenant of redemption, for which, by the light of the blessed Gospel, we of this first age in the kingdom of heaven are fitted to praise God with the more intelli-

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### ment hath.

tion of God's ancient redemption enjoyed by compare Luke xxi. 28, and and eleventh psalm self, which follows it. hereby shewn to have the of "the upright ones," (xi. 5.) By careful con- former to be by His own er to be bringing His mysti- for very life through faith. to have been intended for a might be thought that the to use these two in a similar Christ in His own Person and prefixed to the Hallel, and of the first and second.

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## CXII.

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any it, are each constructed on  
with Hallelujah, which plainly

gence in the words of this psalm from the second to the end of the eighth verse.

Happy they who intelligently respond to the Psalmist's invitation in the first verse to sing the praise of God, not only in the public congregation, but as of His elect in the secret assembly of the upright: who, in Ps. lxxxiii. 3, are called "His hidden ones," and by David in Ps. xxvii. 5, spoken of as "hidden in the secret of His tabernacle." See too Ezek. xiii. 9. Not only is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom, agreeably with the Psalmist's testimony in the last verse of this psalm; but (placing it as he here does after mention of the Lord's goodness, at the summing up,) he means that it is the perfection also thereof, when rendered out of love. See Isa. xi. 1—3, and 1 Pet. i. 13—20.

### HALLELUJAH.

#### 1.

With my whole heart, in company  
Of upright ones, and in the face  
Of all men worshipping, will I  
Jehovah praise.

#### 2.

Jehovah's works must be confess'd,  
Past all that may by man be reach'd—  
Their glory not to be express'd  
Nor worth impeach'd.

#### 3.

His wondrous counsels hath He will'd  
Mankind to hold in memory  
Himself too is with mercy fill'd  
Ineffably.

#### 4.

Unto His saints He'll give a prey  
Yea give them in the hidden age,<sup>1</sup>  
By cov'nant, heathen at that day  
For heritage.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 5. לְעוֹלָם compare Ps. cxlix. 5-9.



## 5.

Judgment and truth His ev'ry deed—  
 All His commandments sure—  
 In sooth and uprightness decreed  
 For aye t' endure.

## 6.

Unto His people hath He sent  
 Redemption ;<sup>2</sup> and hath made  
 For ever fast His covenant :  
 His Name is dread.

## 7.

In knowledge of Jehovah's fear  
 Begins true wisdom's path ;  
 And he who doth His word revere,  
 Good judgment hath.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 9. Redemption, as applied to the latter generation of God's ancient people, appears to include, along with the spiritual redemption enjoyed by believers during this first age, a bodily redemption too. Compare Luke xxi. 28, Rom. viii. 23, 1 Cor. i. 30, 2 Cor. v. 4. This hundred and eleventh psalm hath a remarkable bearing on the hundred and twelfth, which follows it. Each by beginning with Hallelujah as a prefix is thereby shewn to have the glory of God for its aim ; in each is mention made of "the upright ones," and of "the hidden age"—the world to come. (Heb. xi. 5.) By careful contemplation of both, Christ is to be discerned in the former to be by His own arm bringing salvation (Is. lix. 15, 16) ; in the latter to be bringing His mystical members into enjoyment of it, by becoming their very life through faith.

As the first and second psalms have been shewn to have been intended for a two-fold introduction to David's first book, so it might be thought that the compiler of this fifth book had at one time designed to use these two in a similar way, to denote that the subject of this book was Christ in His own Person and in His people. These two psalms are however prefixed to the Hallel, and therefore are in some sort used after the manner of the first and second.

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 PSALM CXII.

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 Hallelujah.

## ARGUMENT.

This psalm, and the one preceding it, are each constructed on the same principle: each begins with Hallelujah, which plainly

is not intended for beginning of a verse in either; since each fresh line in either is commenced with a fresh letter of the Hebrew alphabet in succession, until the whole twenty-two have been so used. This title of Hallelujah, prefixed to either, shews that both are designed for praise of God.

Again, the use of successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet for successive lines has been thought to have been in other instances intended to prevent the unobserved omission of one or other verse, there being no means in the verses themselves of detecting such an oversight.

Another reason which occurs to me for commencement of each line in these two psalms with a fresh letter of the Alphabet in order, is this:—The unity of each is to be looked on as preserved in Jehovah, to Whose glory it is plain from the Hallelujah prefixed to either, that they are both dedicated. Hence is to be seen a mystic significance here in the use of all the letters of the Alphabet in the subject of either.

What, then, in each case is that subject?

The hundred and eleventh psalm is to the glory of Jehovah the Redeemer. This hundred and twelfth psalm to that of Jehovah our Rewarder. St. Paul, in Heb. xi. 6, observes—without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is; and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

This testimony suffices to shew that the subject of this hundred and twelfth psalm is of moment enough to be a counterpart (as here represented) to that all-important one of God our Redeemer. Now in the book of Revelation, which is acknowledged to be steeped in the mystical learning of the Rabbis, the Lord Jesus, at verse 8 of chapter 1, uses a figure for description of Himself, which throws new light upon this use of every letter of the Hebrew Alphabet in order for the initial word of each line in psalms setting forth the glory of God.

He there saith: I am Alpha and Omega; that is, the first letter and the last, but not to exclusion of the letters intermediate. For as Milton makes Adam in his morning hymn praise

“Him first, Him last, Him midst and without end,”

a like idea seems to me to be mystically denoted by the structure of these two psalms, with every line beginning with a new letter in alphabetical order.

Let God's scheme of redemption run through every letter of the Alphabet—or, to drop the figure, experience every variety of opposition that intellectual and moral scepticism impersonated in Satan and his agents can resort to—He will wind it up! He'll be its Z as He has been its A! “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things—to Whom, says the Apostle (and

so say we) be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!" (Rom. xi. 36.)

Viewed in the light of this descant on Hebrew and, we will add sacred, mysticism, the verses of this hundred and twelfth psalm are not to be so much looked on as descriptive of the righteous man's experience in the comparatively short span of his single life, as rather in the aggregate from the beginning to the end of God's probationary dealing with the race. For in this way Scripture is found to speak frequently of one beloved of God living in the persons of his remote descendants for the purpose of entering on the inheritance God hath promised them.

In this sense Abraham, as one that, according to the first verse of this psalm, "feared God and had great delight in His commandments," though not living to receive in his own person the promise of the land of Canaan for an inheritance, confidently looked to God for the bestowal of it in God's good time on a generation of those that should in the course of nature descend from him, and come out of his loins. In this sense Jeremiah saith of Jacob—another righteous man according to the rule now quoted—that in a day forthcoming a certain generation of his descendants shall be in so fierce a persecution that it shall be said (verse 7), "it is even the time of *Jacob's* trouble, but *he* shall be delivered out of it."

Compare Isa. xxix. 22.

This is the only sense in which any man that looks to God for the blessings spoken of in this psalm can be conceived to attain the part appointed unto him. For each of the blessings promised by God is not intended to be wholly bestowed on each one in particular; but distributively to each one, and wholly to the aggregate of the righteous man's generation. For as St. Paul reminds us in Gal. iii. 16, promises were made to Abraham of two kinds; some of an inheritance in the earth, which he became aware that he might not enter upon in his own person; as St. Paul in Heb. xi. 8—19, points out: while there were others relating to the heavenly rest with God Himself (Heb. iv. 9), for which alone he personally looked—setting his affections upon God.

Now the psalm before us being composed for the use of Abraham's descendants after the flesh, while as yet the Father was with their congregation under the Mosaic covenant, it bids those of that righteous man's natural descendants, which were "not of the circumcision only, but also walked in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised," (Rom. iv. 12,) look to God for the promises on earth, as well as those spiritual ones for which alone Abraham himself looked.

But when (as is the case, since their national rejection of Jesus for Christ, in the Apostles' days,) those descendants of

Abraham, though circumcised, no longer walk in the steps of that faith for which their fathers were counted righteous while yet uncircumcised, and are nationally repudiated for an appointed time; and that we of the Gentiles, together with a certain remnant of the Jews that may be gathered unto Jesus through "our mercy," (Rom. xi. 31,) are called under our circumstances (Rom. xv. 1—13) to use this psalm, as being for the time present the only remnant of the true Israelites, we cannot look to all the promises here spoken of as belonging to us; but to that spiritual one alone which Abraham himself expected personally to inherit; as is to be gathered, from St. Paul's careful use of "promise" in the singular number, in Gal. iv. 16, and "promises" in the plural, in Gal. iv. 17, 18, 22, and 29.

Bearing in mind this rule of interpretation, we shall clearly see how every word of the hundred and twelfth psalm can be used by us, with the fullest conviction of its being appointed by God to be fulfilled to the generation of the righteous; as well in regard to earthly promises as to that heavenly one, in God's own times.

Moreover, the glory of God may be seen in this way to be the aim of the psalm, as its prefix Hallelujah indicates; because the generation of the righteous who inherit the promises are, from Abel downwards, partakers of one Spirit; so as to be one in Christ; whence Christ, as God, is their Rewarder (Isa. xxvi. 12).

According to this system of interpretation, when reading in the first verse—"Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments"—if we suppose Adam after his repentance to have become one of this character, then what we read in the second verse, to this effect—"His seed shall be mighty upon earth"—though not fulfilled to Abel in person, who was his seed, was certainly not fulfilled in Cain, who was also his seed; for Cain was not "of the generation of the upright ones"—a clause defining in what circumstances the preceding one should be brought into operation—to wit, in those alone of the righteous man's seed that should be righteous like their father, through participation in the same renewing Spirit. The original word for "generation" in this second verse, including moral character; as in Gen. vi. 9.

But to Abel, and Adam in him, was fulfilled what is testified in the fourth verse: "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The third verse, which saith, "Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever," was occasionally though not invariably experienced by Adam's faithful descendants (according to the limitation already shewn to be imposed by the latter clause of the preceding verse); as may be seen in the history of Noah, Melchisedec, Job, Abraham.

The latter clause of the fourth verse being in the singular number, appears to be more properly taken with the following

one, than referred to the former clause of the fourth, which is in the plural.

Provided the principle of interpretation above laid down be observed, we of this age in the kingdom of heaven can in a general sense apply the testimonies to ourselves from the fifth to the eighth verse.

Because God will in the ordinary course of His providence cause "the generation of the upright ones" to see good days even in this life, by following the things that make for peace; (1 Pet. iii. 8—12), though we have no pretence for looking to attainment of the promises to Abraham respecting Palestine, nor other tokens of God's special providence over them that were under the Mosaic covenant—nor yet "to see our desire fulfilled" upon any but our spiritual enemies and those of Christ's Church—the world, the flesh, and the devil. Nevertheless, when the times of us Gentiles shall, by our abuse of the grace especially poured out on us during this first age in the kingdom of heaven, have run out; so that our iniquity shall have come to the full, and God in mercy to mankind shall return to His ancient people Israel, the time will have come for the earthly promises, made by God to Abraham, to be once more looked for by "the generation of the upright ones" among that people, as they are held forth in this psalm, along with the heavenly ones, which are to be subsequently entered on.

Moreover, we gather from Scripture that to that "generation of the upright ones" shall in pre-eminent degree be fulfilled *all* the varied experiences of "darkness" and "light" spoken of in this psalm, until they shall on this earth "see their desire upon their enemies;" whom they hold to be such (though being their brethren of Cain's unregenerate stock) because the enemies of their Lord and Saviour. This unregenerate stock is spoken of in the 10th verse, at first in the singular number to stigmatise each individually; and afterwards in the plural, to include them all collectively.

The judgment upon a certain generation of these shall not only be witnessed, but executed by a certain generation of the righteous ones, as is similarly predicted in psalms cviii. 13 and cxlix. 5—9; whereupon in this way, at close of the millennial reign, when the mystery of God shall have been finished—when wicked men's contrariety shall have run through every letter of the alphabet, or, dropping the mystic metaphor, had recourse to all the opposition to God's promises of rest to the seed of the righteous ones, that the case admitted of—God will prove Himself the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him—the A and the Z of the whole scheme or mysterious plan of redemption, with its rewards and punishments—yea, will Himself be in the person of Christ the Bringer of the reward to each; so that Christ shall be glorified in them. (2 Thess. i. 10.)

As for ourselves, in this present age of the kingdom of heaven, provided we fear the Lord so as to love His commandments and count none of them grievous (1 John v. 3) how mortifying soever, we give the required proof of having repented toward God of our natural unbelief, and of having been, for our prayer of faith, renewed with a measure of the Spirit of Christ; so as to be "of the generation of the upright ones" spoken of in the second verse. Then wealth may or may not be our lot: but if it is, we shall take it, as here described, to be a trust reposed in us by God.

And when troubles come, (which sooner or later shall come on all of this age that will live godly in Christ Jesus—2 Tim. iii. 12) "light will spring up" for us, because of trusting in the Lord to be our heart's strength (Ps. lxxiii. 26; Philip. iv. 13).

Hence we shall not be moved from our hope by the aspect of worldly affairs threatening the Church of God.

The distinctive character, too, of the child of God as rather "good" than only "righteous"—a distinction insisted on in Romans v. 7, and exemplified in Matth. i. 19—will be followed by the "generation of the upright" in this age, according to the rule laid down in this psalm.

Thus shall Christ not only "be proclaimed with our lips but displayed in our lives," and He shall be in us the hope of glory (Col. i. 27). To Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, majesty, dominion, and power, now and for ever! Amen.

## 1.

He's blest, that doth Jehovah make  
The chief aim of his mental sight,  
And doth in His commandments take  
Supreme delight.

## 2.

Renown'd for might shall be his seed.  
The generation shall be blest  
Of upright ones—so 'tis decreed—  
In God's own rest.

## 3.

Wealth shall be theirs, with righteousness.  
Yea, unto those that are upright  
In darkest hour of their distress  
Shall spring up light.

4.<sup>1</sup>

Gracious, compassionate, yet just,  
A good man favour shews, and lends—  
Applying what's left in his trust—  
To worthy ends.

5.<sup>2</sup>

He'll for the hid age surely wait  
Unmov'd—the righteous man shall be  
To hold that hidden age's state  
In memory!

6.

Upon Jehovah he relies,  
Nor shall aught him with fear inspire,  
Till he sees on his enemies  
His heart's desire.

7.

In righteousness rich, on the poor  
His wealth with lib'ral hand is spent.  
His horn in honour evermore  
Is eminent.

8.

The wicked at that sight shall pine;  
Yea, gnash his teeth, yet melt away.  
All hopes of sinners shall decline  
For aye that day.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 4. The latter clause of this verse is here taken with the first of the fifth verse.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 5. The mention of לְעוֹלָם occurs here in the midst of the psalm, which can hardly be without significance in so mystically constructed an one as this. For we have seen the special significance of this word in Ps. xxviii. 9. And in Ps. xxxvii. which, like this hundred and twelfth, is acrostic, it was shewn to be mystically hidden in the verse where the first letter of it, ו, ought to have otherwise been found commencing the first word thereof. In Eccles. iii. 11, it is testified that God hath set it in man's heart. On this point Rom. viii. 18—26 throws light confirmatory of the sense in which I here suppose the hope hereof to be especially placed in "the upright ones," to whom Christ, the hope of glory, brings it.

PSALM CXIII.

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ARGUMENT.

This psalm is the first of six, comprising the greater Hallel, or Hymn of Praise, usually sung in parts during the drinking of four cups at the Paschal feast. Consequently the hundred and eighteenth was that hymn which St. Matthew (xxvi. 30) records to have been sung by our Lord and His disciples after eating the Paschal supper; whereas this psalm before us was sung after all had drunk of the first cup thereat.

In the first three verses there is a triple repetition of praise to the name of Jehovah, mysteriously pointing to the Trinity in the Unity of the Divine Nature, like as in Numb. vi. 23—27. The words are :—

Hallelujah !  
Praise, O ye servants of Jehovah,  
Praise the Name of Jehovah !

This is the first worship of it.

In the second verse we read :—

Blessed be the name of Jehovah, from this time forth  
for evermore !

Here is the second worship of it.

In the third verse we read :—

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same—  
that is from East to furthest West—  
Jehovah's name is to be praised.

Here is the third ascription of worship to it.

Then follows a testimony throughout the rest of this psalm concerning God's condescension in sending His Son in human nature to shew His highest creatures in heaven a pattern of the obedience due to Jehovah, and to recover from among the fallen race of men many sons unto glory, through new birth of His Spirit. These words are :—

Jehovah is high above all nations, and His glory above the  
heavens ;

Who is like unto Jehovah, our God,

Exalted in dwelling—

Condescending in survey—

In heaven and in earth ?

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,  
And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill,

That He may set him with the princes, or free-hearted ones—

Even with the free-hearted ones of His people !



This language is taken from Hannah's song in verse 8 of chap. xi. of 1 Samuel, where it refers to the change made in the natural man, when through faith in the promised Messiah he becomes renewed by His Spirit, so as to be one with Him in nature (John viii. 35, 36), and thus born of God. 1 Sam. x. 12. The figurative force of the phrase "raising the poor out of the dust," is to be proved by reference to 1 Kings xvi., where is to be found, "The word of the Lord which came to Jehu, the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying, Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people."

Also, that of "lifting the needy out of the dunghill," is exemplified in the fourth of Lamentations, at verse 5, where we read, "They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills."

Now, that these figurative terms, "poor and needy" had a spiritual significance at the time of their being used by the Spirit of Christ, in regard to the lost state of man, while unrenewed with the Spirit of Christ, is to be clearly gathered from our Lord's words in more than one parable. For instance, in that of the Marriage Supper, Luke xiv. 21, where, upon the servant telling his master that the bidden guests excused themselves from attendance at his supper, "he, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt and the blind."

In these terms it is certain that the Lord meant to describe those nations of the Gentiles enjoying the highest civilization at that day known on earth, and in the zenith of power.

By a similar figure, too, in Rev. iii. 17, He stigmatises nominal Christians who had, through spiritual pride, failed to ask effectually in His Name for renewal from day to day with His Spirit.

His words being: "Thou sayest that thou art rich, and increased in goods, and in need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art poor and miserable, and blind and naked."

Those, then, that, in the 7th verse of the psalm before us, are designated "poor and needy," are those among Jews and Gentiles, destitute of renewal with the Spirit of Christ, either by having never heard of such a gift, or by having ceased from asking for continuance of it.

This "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15) is to be gained of God by them that hear the Gospel, for only asking it of God earnestly, penitently, in the name of Jesus.

On receiving it they are "raised out of the dust and lifted up from the dunghill," in the judgment of the Creator, to be placed among them whom He, by his Spirit, maketh "free-hearted" as princes—or "a willing people—beauteous in holiness." (Ps. cx. 3.) (See 2 Sam. xxiv. 23.)

After this follows the last verse :

"He maketh the barren woman to keep house,  
And to be a joyful mother of children. Hallelujah!"

Although those commentators may be acquiesced in, who suppose this verse to have been applied by Jews after their return from Babylon to their own congregation, re-established in Jerusalem; yet there can be no serious question of the writer's reference herein, in continuation of the subject dwelt on in verses 7, 8, to the same counsel of God to which the Holy Ghost had stirred up Isaiah in an earlier day, to write at the first verse of chap. liv.:

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that travailest not; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord:

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations. Spare not; lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles."

By help of St. Paul's inspired comment hereon, in Gal. iv. 27—31, we gather that it was the purpose of God, in the first place, to bring the children (previously begotten in freedom from law by Him through faith in His promise concerning Christ) into bondage thereto, by revelation of the Mosaic covenant. (See Rom. v. 13.)

For this covenant had to be received in Israel, as necessary to salvation, by them that should thenceforward be begotten by Him, through faith in the promise concerning Christ; so that they were now no longer begotten free, as in Patriarchal times, but in bondage under law.

And this was to continue until that, by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus in His spiritual body, the Mosaic covenant should be abolished.

Hereupon, once more, those who were begotten of God through faith in Jesus as the Christ, were, by the Holy Ghost's incorporation of them with Him in His death on account of that faith (John v. 24), brought out from condemnation under law into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

All this, St. Paul saith, was symbolized in Abraham's remaining so long without a son by Sarah, that she supposed a custom at that time prevalent for procuring of an heir in a family needed to be resorted to in her case; to which, consequently, she betook herself—namely, that Hagar should be given Abraham for a second wife, in hope of a son by her.

In this she was not disappointed; for Hagar bore him Ishmael, whom Sarah adopted for her own, until she found out in due time God's purpose to bring Abraham the long-delayed son by herself. (Gen. xvii. 16.)

This she accordingly had, and called him Isaac, and knew him to be the child of promise, instead of Ishmael, whom she had for a time reputed to be the one, though in reality he never was so.

And by and bye, when he mocked Isaac, she cast him out of the inheritance. (Gen. xxi. 10.)

In accordance with this course of events in the Patriarchal family, St. Paul teaches us that God is working out in the course of events befalling the Church of His freeborn on earth a parallel, after the manner of an extended allegory. God the Father was in this type represented by Abraham, and the Word of God—the Divine Person so called—by Sarah. Now, like as it was God's purpose that in Isaac, born of Sarah, should "the Seed" be called (Gal. ix. 16), but that the fulfilment of this purpose should be so long delayed that Hagar should, in the meanwhile, be taken to bear Ishmael, (under the supposition that he were the son in whom the seed should be called); even so the Father, Who had all along decreed that the Word of God, (in Whom the seed had been called from the beginning) should be begotten from the grave in spiritual manhood to be the Heir of the world (Acts xiii. 33), deferred fulfilment of this mystery for a long space (Gal. iv. 4); and in the meantime gave the Mosaic Covenant to be received along with the promise concerning Christ, by them that would through faith therein obtain victory over the world; in consequence whereof the children of promise thus begotten under bondage (and on this account symbolised by Hagar) were led to think that the Christ—the Seed in whom to be free (John viii. 36) should, when He came, be under the Mosaic law, and for ever abide under it. (John xii. 34.)

Nor was it until the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, (which resembled the birth of Isaac from parents as good as dead) that they—the children of promise—were undeceived regarding this purpose of God. (Heb. xi. 19.)

But on learning this true interpretation of the course of events befalling Jesus (Luke xxiv. 26) they—the Apostles—(representing Sarah or the Church of the freeborn for the time being) cast out "them that served the tabernacle," Heb. xiii. 10, declaring the risen Jesus to be the Heir; even as Sarah had done to Ishmael on the circumcision of Isaac.

So soon as the children of the Mosaic Covenant—the Jews—represented by Hagar—had through exclusive reliance on it, (instead of taking it "by the side of" the former covenant of grace, Rom. v. 20) neglected that hope of being begotten of God through faith in the free promise concerning Christ (Rom. iv. 11, 12), symbolised by Sarah, and in carnal self-righteousness condemned to an ignominious death the Saviour whom God had begotten of the Virgin Mary, under the bondage of the Mosaic covenant, through her faith in the covenant of promise concerning Christ; and when, added to this, these same children of

Hagar, after the resurrection of Jesus and preaching of the Gospel first unto them by His express command, in spite of the power of the Holy Ghost unanswerably confirming it, contradicted and blasphemed (Acts xiii. 45) after Ishmael's manner of mocking Isaac—they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and were, as a nation, cast out of the inheritance for an appointed time, Matth. xxi. 40—43, and 1 Thess. xi. 15, 16 (with the exception of an elect remnant), and were shut out from that grace which should draw them (John vi. 24) to seek through the covenant symbolised by Sarah grafting into their own olive-tree (Rom. xi. 24) or incorporation with the true heir of Abraham's house—the true Isaac—in whom the elect seed should be called. (Rom. ix. 7.)

The Father withheld from them, as a nation, the grace which should plead with them by the Gospel and draw them to Jesus; while He gave it abundantly to us of the Gentiles. (Rom. xi. 28, and Titus iii. 4—7.)

In this way the Church of the free promise—the Word of God, answering to Sarah—since the resurrection of Christ, has afforded the Father opportunity of begetting souls anew through faith in Christ without bondage any more under law; but chiefly among us Gentiles; though not without a small remnant in every generation from among the Jews. (Rom. xi. 5.)

The Word of God—symbolised by Sarah—bare this Son, even Jesus, from the grave, after the Father returned to her, without pangs; (for death travails not in labour.)

But we of the Gentiles are warned, that for the slackness characterising the majority of us in coming to the birth, concurrently with boasting of a sacramental title to son-ship, (as did the congregation of Jews under the Mosaic covenant in the Saviour's day) the Churches among us Gentiles shall provoke God the Father to leave them, and return in mercy to a chosen generation of His ancient people descended from Abraham, from whom He will then no longer "for our sakes" withhold grace wherewith to be drawn to Jesus (Rom. xi. 28), whereupon that generation, rather than we of the Gentiles, will believe in Him to the saving of their souls by regeneration and renewal with the Holy Ghost, according to the promise in Rom. xi. 30, 31, where it is written—

"As ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy, through their—the Jews'—unbelief."

"Even so, have these"—Jews—"also now not believed through your mercy," the grace vouchsafed to you—"that they also may" for the glory of Christ, and the furtherance of His Gospel among mankind "be commiserated for themselves," or, "themselves also obtain mercy," so as to be drawn by the Gospel to put faith in Jesus and in this way be begotten again of the Father in Him. (1 Pet. ii. 23—25.)

Then will their Church—the Hebrew Christian Church—in the Lord's land, in the fullest sense be the joyful mother of children as testified in Ps. xlv. 15—17; and God's ways will be vindicated as represented in Rev. xv. 3, 4, by their combination of the Song of Moses and of the Lamb: as is also predicted in Ezek. xx. 39—44. In amazement whereat St. Paul exclaims in Rom. xi. 32, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.

"O the depth!"

1.

Hallelujah! raise, O raise,  
Ye that serve Jehovah, praise  
Unto Jehovah's Name!  
To Jehovah's Name forth pour  
Blessings henceforth evermore;  
From the Sun's rise in the East,  
To his setting in the West  
Jehovah's praise proclaim!

2.

O'er all nations lifted high,  
Is Jehovah! 'bove the sky,  
Doth His great glory soar.  
With our God, Jehovah, where  
Shall we find one to compare?  
Dwelling up so high above,  
Stooping to survey, in love,  
The earth and heaven o'er.

3.

From the dust poor doth He raise—  
Needy from the dunghill base—  
'Mongst free-hearts to have a place—  
His free-hearted! Yea, makes He  
Her that barren was, to be  
Of a num'rous house possest,  
Hallelujah! mother blest,  
Of a God-adoring race.

## PSALM CXIV.

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ARGUMENT.

That this psalm was not composed at an earlier date than the time of Josiah, may be inferred from its mention of Judah as the sanctuary chosen by God; at the same time that honourable mention is made of the house of Jacob or Israel: denoting that the rivalry occasioned by revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David had passed away. It may be considered due to the prophecy of Jacob in Gen. xlix. 8—12, that the supremacy which Judah only arrived at in the time of David, should here be dated so far back as the exodus from Egypt.

This hundred and fourteenth psalm seems to me to have been framed on the basis of Asaph's older one—the eighty-first—which contains no express mention of Judah; for Asaph apparently worshipped before the Lord in Gibeon, where the tabernacle continued until Solomon's time.

It seems to me that in this hundred and fourteenth psalm is designedly rehearsed with vehement but reverently-ordered fervour, the plaintive remonstrance of Christ Himself by Asaph's mouth in the eighty-first psalm.

In that psalm, as explained by me, it was shewn how the Lord, after saying that He led the house of Jacob out of Egypt, complained of hearing among them "a language that He understood not;" that is, a strange language of murmuring. And it was there explained, that this was indulged by them, because He led them down the peninsula of Sinai over against the land of Egypt, and away from the promised land; though they had gone forth in full expectation of entry on it.

But the Lord adds, that He answered their strange behaviour at Sinai; inasmuch as He there gave them sufficient reason (if they would have reflected) to know why He had led them by a circuitous route towards the promised inheritance.

For it was firstly needful that they should be furnished with the Mosaic law (Deut. iv. 5), and secondly, that they should be trained to obey discipline in mind and body. (Exod. xiii. 17.)

Now it seems to me, that the author of this hundred and fourteenth psalm takes especial notice of this pathetic remonstrance on the Lord's part with His people Israel, for indulgence in strange language, which He could not understand; that is, deign to know. (Matt. vii. 33.) On this supposition the entire psalm will be found free from difficulties, and highly hortatory on the subject of reverence towards the Lord in their midst at that time.

The first verse is—

1. When Israel went out of Egypt  
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language.
2. Judah was his sanctuary,  
Israel His dominion.

Here I admit that the word “people” in the latter clause of the first verse being placed in correspondence with “Egypt” in the former, ought most naturally to be reckoned explanatory of it. This will make the Egyptians to be “the people of a strange language,” as we know they were. For in Gen. xlii. 23 it is said, Joseph spake to his brethren by an interpreter.

But the word here in the Hebrew for people, when used in the singular number, is almost always spoken of Israel, and it has been already shewn that God in Ps. lxxx. (which we assume to have been referred to in this hundred and fourteenth) complains of Israel about that time using towards Him a strange language that He knew not: shewing, that “strange” was there used in a spiritual sense, indicative of discontent and murmuring—a sense, in which the Israelities themselves might be denounced for “strangers.” (Compare Ps. liv. 3, and lix. 5.)

Nevertheless it seems preferable that in this 1st verse of Ps. cxiv. by “the people of a strange language” should be understood the heathen inhabitants of Egypt.

Here it seems to me the psalmist pointedly saith in this hundred and fourteenth psalm, that Israel was called out *from* the people of a strange language: consequently, he may be taken to hereby imply, that they ought not themselves to have used strange language, or undutiful, toward God.

But in the eighty-first psalm—clearly here referred to—they did; as Christ by Asaph’s mouth testifies. Now it appears to me that this hundred and fourteenth psalm is written with the intention of pressing upon the Jews this complaint brought by Christ against their fathers; to the intent that they should not fall into the like sin, by failing to acknowledge the presence of the Lord in their midst.

The altered circumstances of Israel, in the time of this hundred and fourteenth psalm being composed, from those in which the eighty-first had been, called for this warning as to the danger in Israel of using strange language remaining the same, owing to the corruption of human nature; although Judah, in which God had placed His sanctuary from the outset in the Divine purpose, had from the days of David’s reign really become so; whereas in Asaph’s time Ephraim was ceasing to be so, after having had the ark in their midst for 328 years—from Joshua’s days to Samuel’s—when for 70 more it was at Kirjathjearim.

The psalmist accordingly with highly animated and vivid imagery draws Judah’s attention foremost to this duty, now that

it was the foremost tribe, by mentioning how at going out of Egypt—the sea in its parting asunder—as also, subsequently the Jordan in doing the like—besides the heaving and sinking of Sinai with its circumjacent hills—shewed *their* perception of some unusual influence. He asks these objects in nature, in the hearing of the tribe taken by God to be His sanctuary, what that influence could be?

And, taking it for granted, that his hearers readily gave the right answer, he, in verse 7, follows it up with an application to his hearers of what he had stirred them up to acknowledge.

If Sinai trembled, seems he to me to say,—If the Red Sea parted itself, and Jordan stood up on an heap at the will of Jehovah, made known to these objects in nature in the way appointed by Him, that they should receive it; then tremble thou land of Judah, said the psalmist, at the presence of the Lord! at the presence of the God of Jacob! Here, as it seems to me, the substitution of ‘earth’ in our authorised version spoils the force of the psalmist’s appeal, which is supposed by me to be similar in strain with Christ’s own complaint against Israel for strange language in Ps. lxxxi.

The ‘land’ of Judah was that in which the God of Jacob had placed His Name—it was “His sanctuary,” wherein His glory exclusively dwelt: surely then, that land ought to tremble at the presence of the Lord!

But this was what it did not!

It hence appears that the word ‘land,’ then as now, had a double signification; standing as well for the people of that land, as for its ground: just as “strange language” has been shewn to have in early times admitted two senses; now meaning, foreign speech—now, that which was undutiful. It seems to me that the psalmist with much emphasis reserved express mention of the Divine Name until his announcement of the duty that he would have the ‘land’ of His sanctuary cherish!

This is a rhetorical figure very conspicuously used in 2 Kings xliii. with reference to Josiah. (See the reservation of his name in that chapter till verse 16.) It is also significantly, as it seems to me, added by the psalmist in verse 8, that the hard rock had yielded to the God of Jacob the water He would have of it.

Should the hard rock yield, when appealed to in the way appointed by Him; and should Judah—His sanctuary—when appealed to in the way appointed by God for dealing with His moral responsible creatures by the word of His grace, refuse to yield compliance?

Alas! Jeremiah, who probably lived about the time of this psalm being written, in chapter v. testified at verse 3—

O Lord, are not Thine eyes upon the truth?

Thou hast stricken them; but they have not grieved—



Thou hast consumed them; but they have refused to receive correction.

They have made their faces harder than a rock—they have refused to return!

If the Jews who used this psalm at the Passover supper so understood it, as here explained, they would feel it to be a solemn call on them to revere the Lord Who had by His covenant of grace laid on them the especial obligation to fear Him, as no other land had at that time the opportunity to do.

At the passover before the crucifixion of our blessed Lord, when this psalm was actually sung by Him and His disciples (Matt. xxvi. 30), what a call for reverence of Him Whom John the Baptist testified to be the Lord in mortal flesh, must its language have been to them! while He Himself, in the terms of this psalm, devoutly offered His service of fear to His heavenly Father!

1.

On Israel's egress  
From Egypt—Jacob's house  
From an idolatrous and strange-tongu'd race—  
For Him in holiness  
Judah a dwelling was,  
All Israel also did His rule embrace.

2.

By His dread presence aw'd  
The sea recoil'd and fled—  
Swift flowing Jordan stood—a mantling heap!  
Mountains their bases broad  
Upheaving, bow'd the head—  
And hills in sport unwonted skipp'd like sheep!

3.

What ail'd thee, O thou sea,  
When thou didst shrink in fear?  
Thee, Jordan, with thy current backward roll'd?  
Ye mountains, that to be  
All sentient did appear,  
Or you, ye hills, that frisk'd as lambkins of the fold?

## 4.

Before the Lord's dread face  
 Be thou too aw'd, O land !  
 Before the dreaded face of Jacob's God !  
 Who made for streams a place,  
 Where erst was thirsty sand,  
 And from the rock brought water with a rod.

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## PSALM CXV.

## ARGUMENT.

Here is the third psalm in the great Hallel—the series of hymns sung at the Paschal feast, or after it—subsequently to the return out of Babylon, when Ezra is considered to have arranged in order this fifth book of psalms. As such, it is to be remembered that it was in due course sung by our blessed Saviour Himself on the night before His agony in the garden—His betrayal and death.

Viewed in this light, how moving is its language! what humility towards God does it imply that the lowly Jesus had, as a Man! not ascribing to His own merit, but to His Father's mercy and truth, the extension of blessings to His own people and mankind at large for which He looked, through yielding Himself to His Father as a sacrifice at His approaching crucifixion. (Rom. xv. 8, 9.)

With what steadfast setting of His face as a flint, in the persuasion that He should not be eventually and finally ashamed, though made temporarily to groan under much shame (Heb. xii. 2), may He be regarded as here cheering His disciples, by asking according to the 2nd verse, "Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?" when He knew that from His Father continuing to hide His face from Him, not only would His unbelieving fellow-countrymen exclaim, like heathens, "where is thy God?" (Matt. xxvii. 40—46); but even His own disciples, though at heart loving Him, through pressure of calamity would forsake Him, because seeing no sign of God's interposition in His behalf. (Luke xxiv. 21.)

With what subjugation of His own will as man under His Father's in fear (Ephes. v. 21) did He say according to the 3rd

verse; "But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever it pleased Him;"—He Himself being the instrument in His Father's hand—the polished shaft (Isa. xlix. 2, 3)—for accomplishing in the great work then in hand "whatsoever His hand and His counsel determined before to be done." (Acts iv. 28.)

How did He exemplify in this behaviour His Father's power from the highest heaven to make men willing through His fear (Heb. v. 7, and Isa. xi. 2, 3); as contrasted with the idols of silver and gold worshipped by the millions of heathen which cannot move any one that waits on them! since the priests, who are the agents of the imposture, are they alone that speak for the idols, and lead these deluded votaries of dumb idols after their own pleasure. (1 Cor. xii. 2.)

Here then we have an emphatic contrast between priests of idols, who lead their fellow-men after their own pleasure, and the Lord Jesus—the priest after the order of Melchisedec—Who, at infinite bruising of Himself, yielded to His Father's pleasure! For so must all true ministers of Christ, who would not be greater than their Master. (John xiii. 15—17.)

That the Father in heaven may "do whatsoever pleaseth Him," verse 3, through the agency of willing instruments, makes great demands on their trust in Him: because He does not throughout their labour make it by their success manifest to the world, that He is with them Who doeth what it pleaseth Him with the inhabitants of the earth (Dan. iv. 35); far otherwise. He may grant their opponents temporary success, "raising them up that He might shew in them His power—enduring with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (Rom. ix. 17—22): even as the Lord Jesus well knew, that it might please Him at that crisis then impending to do, notwithstanding that He prayed to the contrary. (Matt. xxvi. 39.)

How moving then, under these circumstances, come the words from verse 8 to 11 as uttered by the Lord Jesus to His disciples at the Paschal table, plunged in grief for Him; while He exhorts them that should be His future ministers to trust, as He Himself then did, in His Father—making the language of the psalmist His own! Trust in God in heaven is here emphatically contrasted with recourse to an idol before the eyes.

The congregation of Israel, the Priesthood of Aaron's line (for by Ezra ii. 63, and Nehem. vii. 65, we see that at the Lord's return that line is to be reinstated), together with all those out of the Gentiles that fear the Lord, are solemnly charged by the Saviour to trust in God as able, though in heaven, to "do whatsoever it pleases Him"—an exhortation in entire accordance with the Apostle Paul's exhortation to similarly trust in our Ascended Lord, as we would in God His Father. (John xiv. 1, 2, and Col. iii. 1, and Phil. iii. 20, 21.) Wherefore there is here the most emphatic condemnation of those ministers of Christ—who on

the plea of God's manifestation of His presence in heaven, and similarly that of the Lord Jesus—recommend the use of pictures and images of Him to help on earth the mind of beholders, in rendering that obedience to God which is required of them.

How exemplary was the trust put in God by the Lord Jesus at that Paschal table when saying, according to the 12th verse, "The Lord hath been mindful of us. He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel. He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the Lord both small and great!"

The words of the 14th and 15th verses, when considered as spoken by our Lord at that Paschal supper, assuredly received the first instalment of fulfilment in the outpouring of the promise of the Father upon His disciples, who at His bidding tarried for it in Jerusalem.

The words of Peter in Acts ii. 39, coming so soon after the use of this psalm by the Lord Jesus, seem to contain a reference to these in verse 14. The word "children" is assuredly to be taken literally in both these places, and not as in the 16th verse: and the promise in Isa. xlv. 3 is confirmatory hereof.

If it be borne in mind that under the Mosaic covenant, only male children were appointed to receive visible enrolment in the congregation (it being left to charity to conclude that the God of all the earth would do what was right towards the female children), we can perceive a reason for children being mentioned in this 14th verse, and in Acts ii. 39, when in the kingdom of Messiah female children of believers should be appointed to visible enrolment in the covenant people of God equally with male—that distinction between male and female being done away in Christ (Gal. iii. 28), which had been asserted in the law of Moses (Lev. xii. 5) because of Eve having been first in the transgression. (1 Tim. ii. 14, 15, and Gen. iii. 16.)

On this account Israel has, since that day of Pentecost, experienced a fulfilment of the promise in verse 14 of this psalm: and not only so, but because nations of Gentiles are, since that Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost on Christ's disciples, called to participate with Israel in the knowledge of God, upon the simple condition of fearing Him and working righteousness (Acts x. 34, 35); the Lord "has increased Israel more and more," verse 14. Faith in Christ's word being that one thing which the wicked man, if penitent, can do to save his soul alive. (Ezek. xviii. 21; John v. 24.)

In the same way the 15th verse may be regarded as having received emphatic fulfilment in Christ's kingdom, after that faithful rehearsal of it to His disciples at that last supper. For although "blessing" is a word of large import in Scripture—being used sometimes to denote the favour of God in various ways for prosperity in this life (Matt. vi. 32)—yet that which in the psalms and prophets is more especially called blessing from

the Lord, is the gift of righteousness, and bestowal of the Holy Ghost; both of which having been first purchased by the sacrificial death and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, were granted by the Father unto His Apostles with signs such as the world might confess to be from God—being an instalment of what shall hereafter be plenarily poured out upon Israel at the Lord's return to reign over them. For in the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah already referred to, and the 3rd verse, what in the last clause but one is called 'spirit,' is in the last called 'blessing.'

And in psalm twenty-four, where it is asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" after the reply, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully"—it is added, "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

It may hence be concluded that the words "Ye are the blessed of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth," are fulfilled in the bestowal of 'righteousness.'

Now in Rom. iv. 1—10, St. Paul shews by the cases of Abraham and David that this "blessedness" came in their day from God upon them (in anticipation of what Jesus should do to earn it) by God's accounting their faith to be righteousness, and thus admitting them into a state of acceptance; that they might, as they were bid, forthwith ask for His Spirit for their renewal.

But inasmuch as St. Paul in 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9, shews that there is further a ministration or delivery of righteousness to the believer in Jesus—which is different from counting his faith to him for righteousness, and is an actual infusion of Christ's righteousness into him through faith—this seems in a peculiar sense to fulfil (at least in the way of instalment) the words of verse 15 of this hundred and fifteenth psalm, "Ye are the blessed of the Lord."

For this ministration of righteousness is the infusion of the Lord's sacrificial flesh and blood into the heart, to be in alliance with the believer's soul, for the counteracting of "the motions of sins" by the old man therein with the godly motions of the new (Galat. v. 17); and since the sacrificial death of Christ has been consummated, none can receive a measure of the Spirit of Christ, who does not believe in Christ Jesus, and see his need of deliverance from the death demanded of him for his sins, by the meritorious death of Christ, wherewith, upon his believing in Christ, he is joined; so as to have Christ's deliverance from under the law, to be his deliverance from under it according to John v. 24.

The mention in this 15th verse of Him, Whose "blessing" is commemorated, being the Maker of heaven and earth, is intended to admonish the hearer, of its being a blessing which nothing can reverse! (Rom. viii. 31—39.)

In the 16th verse, if we consider the Lord at that last supper to be saying, "The heaven of heavens is the Lord's"—there He manifests more especially His presence—"but the earth hath He given to the children of men," we are minded to gather here His meaning to be, that if the earth be His gift to men, they ought not ungratefully to exclude all honourable mention of His Name from their assemblies. Let them therefore (as we would suppose Him to imply) faithfully hearken unto God's word concerning Christ, and seek of Him in Christ's Name the promised blessing of righteousness and renewal with Christ's Spirit, that they may not continue, as they are by nature, "dead" in trespasses and sins: for such can no more praise the Lord, (as all alive on earth ought,) than they that go down into silence in the grave.

The last verse, viewed as spoken by the Lord Jesus on that eventful night for the awakening of His sorrowing disciples, may be regarded as a prediction that the earth shall never be wholly destitute of some among men to praise Him; though the crisis in which the Saviour spake these words at the last Paschal supper eaten by Him, was one in which the congregation of them that praised was reduced to the lowest dimensions.

There shall indeed, as we learn from Isa. xxvii. 20, yet come an awful hour of tribulation for Jacob (Jer. xxx. 6), when His nation shall be reduced to a similar strait; namely, of accepting death, for deliverance. But doubtless the chosen remnant of Israel, which shall have then believed in the Lord Jesus, will take His example of trust in His Father, when for the last time on earth using these words, as an encouragement of themselves unto like patient continuance in well doing, until the pit be digged up for the ungodly, and righteousness turn again unto judgment. (xciv. 15.)

Let us then see that we be not among "the dead that praise not the Lord" (although living within the sound of His Word) but that we "trust in Him," and in our day, by obtaining His blessing, intelligently ascribe "blessing" to Him.

## 1.

Not to us, O not to us  
 But to Thy Name all the praise  
 For Thy mercy and Thy truth  
 O Jehovah we would raise !

## 2.

Why should heathen scoffers ask  
 Where's their God ? our God's on high !

All it pleas'd Him to be done,  
Men did, tho' unwittingly.

## 3.

Silver idols and of gold  
Works of men's hands only are.  
Mouths have they not meant to speak,  
Eyes, but with no vision there,

## 4.

Ears too, with no pow'r to hear,  
Noses not design'd to smell,  
Hands and feet which may not move,  
Throats which thence no sound expel.

## 5.

As the idols, such, that make,  
Or that worship them, must be.  
In Jehovah, Israel,  
Trust thou ! help and shield is He !

## 6.

In Jehovah, Aaron's house,  
Trust thou ! help and shield is He !  
Ye that fear Jehovah, know  
Shield and help in Him have ye !

## 7.

For us hath Jehovah car'd,  
And will bless us ; He will bless  
Israel's house, and Aaron's, and  
Great and small, that Him confess.

## 8.

You Jehovah shall increase  
And your children, more and more.  
Of Jehovah blest are ye,  
Ruling earth and heav'n o'er.

## 9.

Lo ! Jehovah dwells on high  
Far above the highest heav'n :  
But the whole earth's wide extent  
Unto man's race hath He giv'n.

## 10.

Dead in heart, as dead in graves,  
Can Jehovah never praise.  
But henceforward we 'll for aye  
Lauds unto Jehovah raise.  
Hallelujah !

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PSALM CXVI.

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ARGUMENT.

The Chaldaisms in this psalm make it probable that it was written during or subsequent to the captivity. Being the fourth in the greater Hallel, it was sung in due course at the paschal supper. Consequently it was recited by our Lord at that last passover before He suffered death.

It will therefore be highly impressive to view it as used by Him at that solemn hour, before we consider its use by the private worshipper.

In the first two verses He would through love of His Father, reckon the prayers that He should offer during his approaching agony on account of our sins already granted.



In that spirit of duteous love would He take for His own the words :

"I love the Lord, because he hath heard My voice, and my supplications.

Because He hath inclined His ear unto Me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live."

That is, I will not be "a proud doer," self-reliant, Ps. xxxi. 23, but, as man, ask God's help in the work given me to do—God's covenanted help. (Isa. lxiv. 7.) In the next verse—the third—our blessed Lord at that supper expressed what, it may be, had even then begun to come upon Him in a special sense in our behalf.

For, may it not be concluded that by reason of His being made in all points like unto us, sin only excepted (Heb. iv. 15), our Saviour's special agony in Gethsemane under the burden of the sins of the world, was owing to the Spirit of bondage then pricking Him with compunction thereat, even as ordinary men are thus specially convinced of sin? A mysterious and awe-inspiring import is added to the pathetic language of this third verse when considered as coming from the lips of the Master at that paschal feast.

"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon me :  
I found trouble and sorrow !"

The words that followed were both suggestive of what He should do under the burden of our sins ; and also of what He should live to acknowledge that the Father had done for Him under the load.

"Then called I upon the Name of the Lord : O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul !  
Gracious is the Lord, and righteous ! yea, our God is merciful."

The Lord preserveth the simple, or single-eyed. Matth. vi. 22.

"I was brought low, and He helped me.  
Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears,  
and my feet from falling.

I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

The words of the eighth verse are illustrated by those of St. Paul in Heb. v. 7, 8, and those of verse nine may be compared with the like in Ps. xxvii. 13, where the "land of the living" in which to "walk before the Lord" rather refer to life in the immediate presence of God in the holy of holies above, than on earth.

As used by our Lord at that last paschal supper they doubtless were by Him applied to His resurrection in the new and

spiritual manhood, agreeably with the testimony in Ps. xxi. 4, touching what at that crisis He should ask and obtain. The next two verses, the tenth and eleventh, were emphatically applicable to Him of whom it was testified by His very enemies, while He hung on the Cross, "He trusted in God." (Matt. xxvii. 43.)

By reason of this His faith He spake of His Father's mercy towards Him, as it was here provided that He should; not but what He had previously walked in darkness, and should again; "having no light" (Isa. l. 10) concerning His Father's acceptance of His sacrifice for the redemption of mankind from under the curse of God's broken commandment.

By the eleventh verse we read that He should confess,

"I said in my haste, all men are liars,"

or rather—all humanity—the very nature—is vanity, inadequate, and disappointing.<sup>1</sup> The meaning being, as it seems to me, (when viewed as spoken by the Saviour) that the very soul being limited was too frail to bear the infinite amount of outrage done to God by human sin, and consequently must have "failed" before God, Isa. lvii. 16, had not He shewn the Redeemer mercy, by accepting as adequate for compensation of His outraged majesty, His Holy One's unutterable sorrow; and also by sending Him an angel to succour Him under the load. (Luke xxii. 43. Ps. cx. 7.)

In the Saviour's offering up of Himself in righteousness, a ransom for men's souls, the very perfection of it consists in His offering of it as one "that feared," Heb. v. 7, as though confessing the inadequacy of His suffering in a limited nature to exhibit to the full the enormity of outrage done by sin against the Divine Nature which is infinite. Compare herewith Isa. xlix. 4. At recital of the 12th—14th verses when the Saviour said:

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people."

We conceive in our minds the moving sight of our Saviour at that paschal supper, though on the eve of His agony in Gethsemane, magnanimously lifting up for the third time, at that feast, the cup of blessing in thankfulness to His Father for the portion in this mortal life appointed unto Him, familiarly denoted by "a cup" in the hands of the Lord. See Ps. lxxv. 8, with which compare Matth. xxvi. 39. So did the blessed Saviour there render thanks in the presence of His chosen twelve for having been called to do God's will in that respect. Ps. xl. 8, Ps. xci. 16, and John x. 17. How fervently after this would He add in the words of the 15th verse:

<sup>1</sup> Ver. ii. Lying is in Scripture applied to disappointment. See Prov. xix. 22.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints:" whence He might gather, that like as in Ps. lxxiii. 26, it had been written of "His saints:"

"My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."

So would it be with Him, in performance of the work given Him to do: at the failing of His flesh and heart God would be His strength. Ps. xc. 1, 2, and xci. 1, Deut. xxxiii. 27.

Taking therefore as we are bound to do, the language of this 15th verse, as spoken by our Saviour at that paschal supper, with what He shortly afterwards asked of His Father in His agony, Matth. xxvi. 39, we are not to suppose that in saying, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me," He prayed to be absolutely spared from death in the body, which it behoved Him to be stedfastly purposed to undergo, (see John x. 17, 18,) but that He referred to some continued presentation before His pure and loving heart, of the outrage done to His Father's holiness by the sinfulness of sin; which, while pressed by the Spirit of judgment and of burning upon the Saviour's human soul, made thick darkness there concerning the compatibility of forgiveness, in consideration of one perfect sacrifice, with God's unimpeachable justice.

The language of the 16th verse would in the Saviour's lips, at that supper, be expressive of unreserved submission in the capacity ascribed to Him in Isa. xlix. 3. "Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified!" With glad embrace of the self-denying service, He said: "O Lord, truly, I am Thy servant. I am Thy servant—the son of Thine handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds;" words which aptly find illustration in Peter's language on the following day of Pentecost:

"Him God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it."

The verses which follow, when viewed as used by the Saviour, express what He is now doing in His glorified Manhood in the Holy of Holies of the great temple of the universe, in the midst of the Jerusalem which is above. (Heb. xii. 22—24.)

After this adaptation of the psalm before us to the Lord Jesus Himself; its accommodation to the experience of every soul made alive to God in Him by the Holy Ghost is readily perceivable.

The believer's first persuasion of his prayers having been received by the unseen God, may be considered to be gained in observing how the petitions known only to God and himself that he put up in the name of Jesus for pardon, while under conviction of sin by the Spirit of bondage, have been in his own experience answered. Hence the language of the first two verses of this psalm is that of his renewed heart: as also is that in the third verse concerning the desolateness bordering on despair, endured when under convictions of sin by the Spirit of bondage.

The language, from the fourth verse to the end of verse 9, is both a guide unto him in regard of what it behoves him to do, and what he also can take as a record of what he did and found.

In the language of the 10th verse he learns how, out of faith alone in God's promises through Christ, could he be persuaded, as he is, of cleansing and renewal.

On which head he may, with profit, study the use made by St. Paul of these very words in 2 Cor. iv. 14.

It may also be gathered from St. Paul's use of the words, "I have spoken," in 1 Cor. xii. 3—*οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν*—compared with Matth. xvi. 16, that "I have spoken" amounted to "I have confessed," agreeably with Rom. x. 10.

The language of the 11th verse would, in a believing soul's experience, be referred to its sense of manhood's inadequacy to make answer unto God for sins—yea, even to use worthily the grace brought unto one through the promises of God in Christ; so as to be on the verge of despondency, until instructed in God's pledged word and oath that He will not be strict to mark the offences unavoidably fallen into by them who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. (See Heb. vi. 13—30, and 1 John iii. 19—24.)

Again, use of the 12th, 13th, and 14th verses by the awakened soul, tasting peace with God through Christ, will be obviously simplified by remembrance of the Saviour's use of the same as above explained.

For since the Lord Jesus, at that paschal supper, elevated the cup of blessing thereat into the cup of salvation, through His precious blood—the believer, bearing in his mind's eye that act of His Saviour, can look upon the 13th verse as pledging him to draw near to the Lord's table if spared to do so; or, if unable through extremity of sickness, then to be by faith most surely feeding on the flesh and drinking of the blood of His Saviour by the Holy Ghost's application unto his heart of the doctrine thereon.

The words in verse 15—"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"—may be fervently uttered by one who calls to mind what gracious promises the Lord spake to His disciples for their comfort when He was about to depart from them, as in John xiv. 1—6 and 27; and what is testified by St. Paul on this head in Heb. ii. 14.

They, therefore, who have been renewed by the Spirit of Christ, may fervently take up the language of the psalmist in the remaining verses, as spiritual priests, whether male or female (Gal. iii. 28), made meet to minister in the holy place on earth of that great Temple of the Universe, whereof the holiest of all is the company of spirits of just men made perfect, along with innumerable companies of angels round the throne of Almighty God in the heavenly Jerusalem. (1 Pet. ii. 5—9.)

## 1

I love Jehovah, Who my voice hath heard,  
And to my accents vouchsaf'd His regard.  
Long as I live, upon Him will I call.  
Me round about death's sorrows compassed,  
Yea too the pains of hell bow'd down my head,  
Trouble and anguish did my heart appal.

## 2.

Then did I on Jehovah's Name rely :  
Save Thou my soul, Jehovah, was my cry.  
Gracious is He! righteous! yet merciful!  
The single-hearted are Jehovah's care ;  
Help in my low estate to me He bare ;  
Now to thy rest return thou, O my soul!

## 3.

Jehovah hath with thee dealt bount'ously—  
From death,<sup>1</sup> my soul, hath He deliver'd thee—  
Thine eyes from tears—thy feet from falling  
snatch'd.  
I therefore with renew'd heart in the land  
Will walk<sup>2</sup> 'mongst those that round Jehovah stand,  
For Whose salvation I devoutly watch'd.

## 4.

In firm persuasion of our God's good grace,  
I humbly made confession to His praise —  
Telling how sore had my affliction been.  
How, that, throughout the whole of Adam's race  
No truth was to be found before His face,  
I had, through haste,<sup>3</sup> insisted in my spleen.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 8. Heb. v. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 9. Ps. xl. 1. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 11. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 1.

## 5.

Lo! truth from out of mankind<sup>1</sup> is to spring!  
 How can I then unto Jehovah bring  
     Meet off'ring for His benefits to me?  
 Calling upon Jehovah's Name, the cup  
 Of His salvation blythely I'll lift up  
     And to Jehovah vows pay gratefully.

## 6.

Yea 'fore His people I'll pour out my prayer.  
 Unto Jehovah is the sight most dear  
     Of His saints failing 'neath the pangs of death.  
 Thy servant truly I, Jehovah, am—  
 Thy servant I—who of Thy handmaid came—  
     My bonds Thou 'st loos'd, when I yield up my  
     breath.

## 7.

The sacrifice of praise to Thee I'll pay;  
 Calling too on Jehovah's Name I'll pray,  
     So will I render unto Him my vows.  
 Mingling among the company of them  
 That in the midst of thee, Jerusalem,  
     Frequent the precincts of Jehovah's house.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 12. There seems to me to be here reference to the mystery in Ps. lxxxv. 11, and lxxxvii. 5, for thus might the psalmist's grief about man's lying be relieved.

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 PSALM CXVII.
 

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## ARGUMENT.

This psalm, being the last but one sung at the paschal supper, emphatically pledged the Jews from the time of its use (which was in all probability after return from the captivity in Babylon.)

to the evangelization of the Gentiles so soon as Messiah should have come and sent them forth on that errand.

Notwithstanding a certain readiness on their part in the abstract to undertake this mission, neither they that enthusiastically recited this psalm, nor yet the inspired writer of it, could anticipate the circumstances under which the Spirit of Christ foresaw that they, as a nation, would at the coming of Messiah, draw back from the invitation.

St. Peter in his second Epistle, at the end of the first chapter testifies, that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.

"For prophecy came not of old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Agreeably wherewith St. Paul saith in 1 Cor. ii. 11, as "no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no one save the Spirit of God."

Now, in the interpretation of this psalm, the Holy Ghost furnishes a conspicuous exemplification of the fact that He alone can authoritatively tell with what intent He caused holy men of old time to put in writing certain sayings.

St. Paul in Romans xv. is engaged in deprecating the backwardness of them that out of the Jews at Rome, believed in Jesus, from union in public worship with the converts from out of the Gentiles in the same city.

Hereupon, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, he gives an authoritative exposition of this hundred and seventeenth psalm; first explaining the latter verse, and then quoting the former. Of the latter he saith at the eighth verse of Rom. xv. "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy."

Here it is shewn, that although God's "merciful kindness" or mercy, was first extended to the Jews, yet the Holy Ghost had secretly intended to intimate by this verse that in regard to the blessings of Christ's Gospel the Gentiles should more especially glorify God for "His mercy," and the Jews for "His truth."

The Apostle then quotes under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, certain texts out of Scripture, announcing the intent wherewith the Holy Ghost had originally moved holy men to write them.

First, he quotes out of the eighteenth psalm, the verse, "For this cause will I confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy Name," a passage denoting that there should be a willing company of Israel in whose persons the Spirit of Christ would fulfil this mission.

Then he quotes out of the Song of Moses the verse, "Rejoice ye Gentiles with His people," which, when so placed, indicates

the progress made by the speaker of the preceding quotation in the work entered on ; to wit, unto the acquisition of so many converts from among the Gentiles as to be fairly coupled with the corresponding company of their brethren in the faith from among God's ancient people.

After this the third quotation, which is the former verse of this hundred and seventeenth psalm, significantly speaks of all the Gentiles being called by the Gospel to praise God, without mention of His ancient people, implying that Gentile converts occupied the attention of those Jews in whom was the Spirit of Christ, to the exclusion from notice of what few might be gathered from among the Jews. And this quotation is followed up by one out of Isa. xi. 1—10, indicating that the Christ of David's stock should be accepted by Gentiles at large for their king, while as yet there was no appearance of His national acknowledgment by Jews to be theirs.

At the time that the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to arrange this selection of passages for the purpose of denoting His secret intent in moving holy men of old to write them, this avowal was of itself a prophecy.

How completely now have events in regard to spread of the Gospel, among Gentiles rather than Jews, from that time to the present, vindicated this pledge of what had all along been the Holy Spirit's intent !

Consequently, what a proof have we here of the truth of this Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the progress whereof during the last 1830 years has, under the direction of God's providence turned out such as was predicted.

The exposition furnished by the Holy Ghost of His secret intent in causing the utterance of the former verse in this psalm having been stated, let us return to the latter verse hereof, wherein His teaching is, that He hereby gave notice of God's "mercy" being by the Gospel rather exhibited to the Gentiles, and His "truth" to the Jews.

Whether this has been so hitherto the following considerations will suffice to shew. Owing to the ascendancy of traditions by the elders of the Jews over the national mind, when the fulness of the time had come for sending Christ, the Jews were not in a frame of mind to receive the truth of Christ, as preached by Jesus according to the holy Scriptures. Yet for all this God did not refrain from sending His Son, nor even delay the sending of Him to be born among them ; for He remembered the covenant that He sware unto Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Accordingly the Jews have preeminent occasion for beholding herein "the truth" of God.

Also when the Lord Jesus, after His resurrection caused His



Gospel to be first preached to them, they have still greater occasion for beholding the same.

But upon their national rejection of that loving call to belief in Jesus, there seemed to be, humanly speaking, no alternative for mankind at large, (whom the Scriptures spake of as receiving salvation from the Jews,) but that of waiting until the wrath which the Jews had on that account provoked should have run out. (1 Thes. ii. 15, 16.)

But lo! it became apparent by the event, that the Holy Ghost, foreseeing this frowardness of the Jews, had secretly moved holy men of old to write utterances indicative of His intention to take an elect remnant of the Jews, that should believe in Jesus, and make them channels of God's grace by the Gospel to the Gentiles who would hear it, even as we see to have been the case from the days referred to in Rom. xv. 8, 9, to this hour.

If we only take into consideration what must have been the condition of the Gentiles during all these ages, in which Jewish national obstinacy and prejudice have run counter to the mercy and the truth of God in Christ for them, (had we Gentiles been indeed left to await the expiration of that wrath drawn down by the Jewish nation upon themselves,) we shall see lively cause, as Gentiles, to glorify God for "His mercy" towards us by the Gospel.

It may be safely affirmed that our moral condition, as heathens, could not in that case have been better at this day than was that of the Greeks and Romans—the most civilised of the heathen—in the days of the Apostles. For the Chinese and Hindoos, who have to this day nationally remained heathen, were in those days as civilised as they now are; and they have been all this time at a stand-still in moral respects, if not indeed retrograding.

But others of the Gentiles have remained till this day uncivilised; even as we of this nation were in the days of the Apostles, and so might have remained.

Who then can describe the difference in condition, which God's mercy through that band of elect Jews has brought our forefathers and us in the Gospel! Jewish obstinacy, while forfeiting it for themselves would have similarly forfeited it for us, only that the mercy of God would not allow man's unbelief thus to frustrate His purposes of love toward mankind through Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, after regard had to His "truth" in causing Jesus to be born in the family of David; and then again in taking an elect remnant of Jews to be the messengers of His Gospel to the Gentiles, "not by works of righteousness which we had done, but of His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."—Titus iii. 4.

St. Paul tells the Philippians, iv. 8, that by the Gospel God stirs up the nations to pursue things belonging to "virtue and praise." St. Peter also in his second Epistle, iii. 2, saith that God hath hereby called the nations "through the knowledge of Him, to glory and virtue," it being clear from his use of "glory" in 1 Peter ii. 20, that by it he meant "praise."

The two Apostles therefore agree in testifying, that greater incentives to the practice of virtue are offered nations under the Gospel than ever before.

Nor is this all—that the incentives thereto are greater—we learn by Rom. v. 6, that in the Gospel is brought help from above, through faith in Christ, for the practice of virtue, to be had for asking it of God in the Name of Jesus, which man otherwise has not. John iii. 5—21.

Who then can describe the difference in moral respects, regarding this life as well as that to come, which the mercy of God has extended to the Gentiles, by sending to them the Gospel!

We cannot but shudder at the thought of having been, by Jewish national obstinacy, so near exclusion from the Gospel for all these years, during which the wrath nationally provoked by them is running out! How nearly were we Gentiles shut up to a condition at best resembling that of Chinese or Hindoos to this day—or possibly much worse—had not "the mercy of God" provided against such a contingency!

I do not say that heathen nations are any where utterly destitute of incentives to "virtue and praise" or "glory and virtue." Far otherwise.

The Apostles would not have written as they did to them that were only emerging out of heathenism, had men not had even in their heathen state a power of perceiving what was morally worthier, when put before them.

There is a light by Christ lighting every one that cometh into the world. John i. 9.

Also the conscience in man's breast every where prompts him to virtue and praise by the moral maxims current in his nation or tribe. Rom. ii. 14.

But there is no "strength of heart" to be obtained in the state of nature for practice of such virtue and praise as they are called to. Accordingly the instances of worthy performance among heathen are rare and desultory, which caused St. Paul, in Rom. vi. 20, 21, to ask the converts from out of heathenism,

"When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free to righteousness.

"What fruit had ye then, in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things (that ye then did) is death."

Nevertheless, St. Paul, in Rom. ii. 14, saith, "When the Gen-

tiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."

And we believe that, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to the Gospel, many among the heathen, that shall have been found to have laudably acted up to the light given them, shall be freely granted a part in the sacrificial death of Christ, in order to fit them for admission to seats at His marriage supper, left vacant by those who, having been in God's providence appointed unto salvation (1 Thess. v. 9), have ungratefully disregarded all incentives of the highest order, hereby brought them to practise things belonging to virtue and praise; so as to finally forfeit hope in Christ.

For God will assuredly not leave the places at His sacrificial table empty, which the bidden guests (Luke xiv. 23) shall have wantonly renounced: whereby will be exemplified how the "souls are slain that," according to God's ostensible appointment, "should not die, and those be saved alive that," according to the same, "should not live." (Ezek. xiii. 19.)

Some, alas! among us, of no small note intellectually, upon this view of the case, are not ashamed to broach the conclusion, that it is better to leave the heathen as they are, with the light to performance of what belongs to glory and virtue that is in them by nature; more especially, add they, since if, when the Gospel be preached to them, they reject it, the more will be required of them. (Luke xii. 47, 48.)

But such Christians must justly be convicted of great ingratitude toward God, and insensibility to the moral welfare, not only hereafter but here, of their fellow-men.

For it must be acknowledged that, by means of the Gospel, an inconceivably greater number in every nation, having it, are stirred up to pursue things that belong to praise and virtue, for their laudable self-control in this life, and for the well-being of society, than would otherwise be the case: putting out of view for the moment what incalculable gain must further redound to such followers after praise and virtue in the life to come.

But, added to this, the mercy of God in Christ lays an obligation on those that they know it, to obey His command in regard to preaching of it to every creature. For "He hath so done His marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance," and men everywhere ought to sing of His doings, as in this psalm called to do. The condition borne by the most civilized of heathen in our Lord's sight may be learnt from His description of the Greeks and Romans of His day in the parable of the Marriage Supper, under the designation of "poor, maimed, halt and blind." (Luke xiv. 21.)

And again, when commissioning Paul to be His Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts xxvi. 17, 18), the condition of the heathen in His sight may be learnt by His words concerning them:

"To the Gentiles now I send thee, to open their eyes; that they may turn themselves from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; so that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in Me."

Assuredly, if it be acknowledged that man is afforded the means of happiness even in this life according as there are brought to bear on him incentives to follow the things pertaining to virtue and praise, it must be owned that the poorest of our cottagers could not deliberately change conditions with a heathen noble.

If Lazarus, with all his poverty and bodily ailments, would never have exchanged the hope he had in God, by the Gospel, of being after death comforted, for the wealth of the rich man, if he had to accept with it the rich man's heart (which up to that time had been unrenewed), even in the land at that time blessed with revealed truth, much less would he have exchanged it for the like in a heathen land.

The conviction of the poorest among our cottagers ought to be the same, if he would worthily glorify God, for His mercy in blessing us with His Gospel.

There is a further circumstance, as we learn from Scripture, connected with this intercalary or exceptional mercy of God to us Gentiles during this first age in the kingdom of heaven, which ought to make God's mercy in provision of it to be more conspicuous.

It appears from Scripture that God has no more made the propagation of the blessings for mankind in Christ to depend absolutely on the fidelity of us out of the Gentiles, after our conversion through His elect remnant of Jews, than He had in the first instance made it to depend absolutely upon the fidelity of Jews.

It is to be gathered from Scripture that we of the Gentiles shall in process of time, through inclination for traditions of men, prove no less obstructive of His Gospel, than were the Jews in the days of the Lord Jesus.

In this contingency He has not left the world to indefinitely wait for the fulness of the Spirit until we of the Gentiles shall become tractable. On the contrary, when our abuse of the Gospel shall have filled up the measure of our iniquity, He has provided by sovereign election the call of a remnant out of His ancient people, to be the final messengers of His Gospel, who shall be "children that will not disappoint Him." (Isa. lxiii. 8.)

Thus, after the manner in which Abraham was called, without the employment of any messenger out of God's congregation then

on earth; and the wise men from the East in like manner; so will this chosen remnant of Israel, as indicated in Zech. xiv. 2—9.

The conversion of the penitent thief on the cross, and of St. Paul on the road to Damascus—both of them Jews—are acknowledged types hereof.

If this be taken into account, the mercy of God in specially appointing an elect remnant of Jews to open the eyes of us Gentiles, when their own nation had provoked His wrath, is the more wonderful.

For it will not be eventually through us, but immediately from Himself, as above shewn, that the Jews, as a nation, will be recovered to his obedience.

Out of regard for His "truth" God will freely bestow on a chosen generation of Israel in the latter day that former and latter rain of the Spirit, whereof He gave the Jews an instalment on that day of Pentecost next after our Lord's Ascension "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Accordingly, at whatsoever time, yet future, our abuse of the Gospel as Gentiles shall have come to the full, in consequence whereof God shall have, for His truth's sake, returned to His ancient people, with a special mercy for them (Rom. xi. 31, 32); even then, their mercy shall but redound more abundantly than ever to us of the Gentiles; agreeably with the spirit of the invitation breathed throughout this psalm.

For, as St. Paul asks in Rom. xi. 15, "If the casting away of the Jews be the reconciling of the world, what shall be the receiving of them back, but life from the dead?"

Here let us exclaim with the Apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

Great cause as we Gentiles now have to praise God for this His mercy specially granted us (Rom. xi. 30), as a provision against the untractableness of the Jews, we shall have still more for praise on account of His mercy; when, finding that like as God would not permit Jewish unbelief to debar us of the Gentiles, who (if we had the opportunity), during all this continuance of their exclusion, would believe and be saved; so will He not permit that unbelief demoralizing us among the Gentiles unto the filling up of our iniquity, to debar the rest of the Gentiles therefrom that shall have been on earth after His return to His ancient nation.

In this way Christ, Who is found to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, yet remains to be found the glory of His people Israel, until the fulfilment of this hundred and seventeenth psalm in its spirit. (Luke ii. 32.)

Here, then, is to be seen abundant proof that we must not trust in the sense of duty characterizing Jew or Gentile when

ascribed to Christ for the full dissemination of Gospel blessings among mankind, but in God, because of His regard for His truth and His mercy. Wherefore with St. Paul let us say: "Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding and abundantly for us, above all that we ask or think according to His mighty power that worketh in us all, that He glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." (Ephes. iii. 20.)

## 1.

O ye all ye Gentiles, give Jehovah praise—

Ye kindred tribes to Him due homage pay;

For great the mercy towards us He displays,

And without change keeps He His truth for aye.

## PSALM CXVIII.

## ARGUMENT.

This psalm is with great probability concluded to have been composed for use at consecration of the second temple. The description given in Ezra iii. 10, 11, of what took place at laying of the foundation of that second temple, may be taken to favour this assumption.

For we read: "They sang together by course, in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever towards Israel"—words which stand at the commencement and close of the hundred and eighteenth psalm.

Another internal mark which is favourable to the above-mentioned idea respecting the composition of this psalm, is that at verse 3—"The house of Aaron," rather than the King, is called on to say, "That God's mercy endureth for ever."

Another, that in the eighth and ninth verses there is what may be regarded as a reference to the hindrances in the matter of rebuilding the temple, owing to the counter-orders issued by the successors of Cyrus down to Ezra's time.

Compare Ezra i. 1, with iv. 5 and 24.

Also by vi. 7 and vii. 1 observe, that an interval of seventy-nine years had taken place.

Accordingly, this psalm may be supposed to have been written sometime between Ezra vii. and Neh. xiii. 6, or during an interval of twelve years from 457 to 445 B.C.

Again, the revelation to Daniel, in ix. 26, that Messiah should

be cut off in Jerusalem, became the occasion with inspired writers at this time of being wrapt into mysterious foreshadowings of Messiah's death and its consequences.

Hence at verse 10—12 reference is made "to the people of the prince who should come to destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Dan. ix. 20), followed by reference to the cutting off of Messiah, with His resurrection and the building up on Him of a spiritual house—in the first instance by "sending the rod of His power out of Zion" (Ps. cx. 2; John v. 25—27) (which has been in course of fulfilment from the day of Pentecost next following our Lord's Ascension to this present time), and afterwards in verse 25 by the "return of the Lord in person from heaven" (as asked in Ps. xc. 13—17), where the Prayer-Book version by the words "Prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us" serves to explain what is really meant in verse 25 of this hundred and eighteenth psalm by the petition.

"O Lord, send us now prosperity!"

Touching the return of the Lord from heaven, the psalmist is moved in vision to exclaim at verse 26, "Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord"—words which in verse 39 of *Matth. xxiii.* our Saviour significantly shews will denote the conversion of those in Israel that use them to faith in Him; at which time the "nations" spoken of in verses 10—13 of *Ps. cxviii.* will be antagonistic to Israel, instead of in alliance with them, as they were at the cutting off of Messiah.

Moreover, concerning this forthcoming time the psalmist, in verse 27, is moved to foreshew that sacrifices of beasts will again be appointed (apparently in commemoration of the sacrificial death of Christ) to be offered up in the new temple spoken of in *Ezek. xl.—xlviii.*, which is to stand during the Millennium.

Having now stated in a general manner what appear to me to be the contents of this psalm, I shall desist from closer attention to the prophetic parts which are necessarily veiled until the time shall have come for their fulfilment, and shall confine my observations to that part which is cleared up by having become matter of history.

Here let it be recollected that this hundred and eighteenth psalm being the sixth and last of the great Hallel was, according to the custom of the Jewish ritual for the ordering of Divine service in the second temple, sung by the Lord Jesus and His disciples at the paschal supper, before He led them forth to Gethsemane on the night of His agony. (*Matth. xxvi. 30.*)

With what significance must the words from verses 10—24 have at that hour proceeded from His sacred lips!

The words in verse 17—"I shall not die, but live"—are to be understood as those in *John xi. 4* by Jesus Himself, concerning *Lazarus'* sickness: viz, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God"—the "not" being here comparative, and

equivalent to "not so much" for death as "rather for the glory," etc.

In this way we understand the Lord Jesus to have employed the words :

"I shall not die, but live : and declare the works of the Lord ;" meaning, "My death shall be for the very purpose of opening 'the gate of life' by opening of 'the gates of righteousness.'"  
The setting up of the gate being in Scripture, the most significant token of the establishment of one's power (Gen. xxiv. 60 ; 1 Kings xvi. 34) ; all legal and political business being transacted in the gate. (Ruth iv. 1 ; 1 Kings xxii. 10 ; Matth. xvi. 18.)

That the Lord Jesus had, about the time of His betrayal, called especial attention to the 22nd verse of this psalm, is plain from the record in Matth. xxi. 42—44, noticed by Mark at chap. xii. 10, and Luke at chap. xx. 17.

Our Lord's example, in this instance no doubt, subsequently led to the emphatic use of the same by His Apostles. (See Acts iv. 10—12 ; Rom. ix. 33 ; and Ephes. ii. 20.)

There had already been, in Isa. xxviii. 16, a designation of the Messiah as "a foundation stone to be laid in Zion."

But in this hundred and eighteenth psalm the Holy Ghost, on resuming the subject after an interval of three hundred years or so, added that "by the builders it should be refused." All this makes it the more probable that the psalm before us was written, as has been above assumed, upon the consecration of the second temple.

Our Lord's citation of these words in verse 22 with such pointed application to Himself, as is recorded by Matth. xxi. 42, could not fail to be intelligible to the rulers of the congregation who heard it, and knew themselves to be in their capacity of God's ministers, called in the language of Scripture "builders." (See Numb. xii. 7, as explained by St. Paul in Heb. iii. 1—6 ; and indeed at verse 45 of Matth. xxi. this is shewn to have been the case.)

In this way I trust the metaphorical use of the word "stone" to designate the Christ will be perceived to have been by no means forced, but rather in entire keeping with the likening of the Lord's temple to a house. (Jer. vii. 4.) For the house of the Lord, at a very early time, came to be of stone. (See 1 Sam. vii. and 1 Chron. xxviii. and xxix. 2.)

Hence came the need of a foundation stone, which is characteristic of every building. (See Heb. iii. 1—6 ; Ephes. ii. 20 ; and 1 Cor. iii. 10—11.)

And hence the propriety of Isaiah's likening the Christ, when cut off and laid in His grave in Zion, to a "foundation stone."

But although, like the foundation stone of a literal house, laid in the ground at His burial, this stone should be a living one, all the while, as St. Peter points out in his first Epistle, ii. 4—10.



This should happen because of the Lord not "giving His Christ over unto death," according to verse 18; whence Messiah's sacrificial death and miraculous change by the right hand of the Lord, while on the cross, from natural to spiritual, as evidenced by the water flowing with the blood from His pierced side, before He was taken down from the cross, followed by His resurrection on the third day according to His own prediction (Matth. xxvii. 62—66 and xxviii. 11—15) has become the way or "gate" to God for us who believe in Him, and are for that faith buried by the Holy Ghost into His spiritual sacrifice. (John v. 24—29; Heb. x. 19—25.)

See also the Collect for Easter Eve.

Moreover, the same will be the "gate" for that latter generation of Israel to enter on the inheritance of the Lord, mentioned in Ps. lxxviii. 4—6, which shall, according to Isa. xvi. 2—4, be fitted to offer up the sacrifices appointed to be brought into the new temple referred to in verse 27 of this hundred and eighteenth psalm.

In regard of the "corner-stone" to which the Lord is here likened after His resurrection, it is to be observed that no building is ever commenced in the middle of a wall, but always at a corner. With this corner-stone the rest of the building is squared, which, from that circumstance, becomes the "head corner-stone."

Hence the propriety of calling the Lord Jesus, because of His death and resurrection, the head corner-stone of the spiritual temple.

For so surely as a corner-stone is the pledge of the stones that are to be added to it in the future building by a man that knows his own mind; even so is the glorified body of the Lord Jesus in heaven pledge of His people's bodies being in due time joined there unto His. "Because He lives, we shall live also." Meanwhile, we are as spiritual stones founded on Him and built up in Him as our foundation-stone; according to 1 Pet. ii. 5—10.

It remains to shew how "this is the day which the Lord hath made" (verse 24). Let it, then, be considered what unutterable sorrow must have been weighing down the disciples at sight of the betrayal and death of their Master; and we shall understand how the transition from that sorrow to rapture at seeing Him on the third day subsequent thereto, standing before them in His spiritual and uncorruptible body, was as the passage from night into day—a day in which we share who abide in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship.

Again, the Lord Jesus Himself, in Acts xxvii. 18, describes the change produced in the hearts which heed His Gospel as a "turning of them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God."

For a state of sin is, in Scripture, styled one of darkness, and the state of sanctification one of light. (Rom. xiii. 16; 1 John i. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 9.)

In both of these senses the Lord hath, by the resurrection of His Son from the dead, made day out of night for His people.

Let ours, then, be the self-denying and sanctifying resolve of the psalmist :

“ We will rejoice and be glad in it.”

So shall we hold faith with a good conscience ; and, when, upon drawing near to death, we are appalled at the solemnity of the momentous change that is impending, recollection of the resurrection of Jesus and of His words, “ I am the resurrection and the Life,” shall have power through the Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. iv. 20) to make us light in the Lord (Ephes. v. 8) ; so as to exclaim, O Death, where is thy sting ? O Grave, where is thy victory ? (1 Cor. xv. 55.)

Thanks be to God, “ Which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## 1.

To Jehovah ascribe ye your thanks,  
For His mercy for ever endures.  
O Israel ! by you be it said,  
That His mercy for ever endures.

## 2.

And thou, house of Aaron, confess  
That His mercy for ever endures—  
Ye, too, that Jehovah revere,  
Say His mercy for ever endures.

## 3.

On Jehovah I call'd in distress,  
And Jehovah made gracious reply !  
Jehovah's with me ! so, what man  
Might do, I shall boldly defy.

## 4.

Jehovah my helpers assists,  
So my foes' disappointment I'll see !  
In Jehovah 'tis better to trust,  
Than on man's aid reliant to be.

## 5.

In Jehovah 'tis better to trust  
Than on princes dependence to place.  
Were all nations on me to press,  
Their multitudes from me I'd chase

## 6.

In the Name of Jehovah! yea, though  
As bees they should throng me about,  
In the Name of Jehovah their wrath,  
As the fierce blaze in thorns, I'd put out.

## 7.

Sore at me, for my fall didst thou thrust,  
But Jehovah His help to me gave.  
Jehovah's my strength and my song—  
At my side is He, ready to save.

## 8.

The voice of salvation and joy  
In the house of the righteous is heard.  
Jehovah's right hand doth prevail—  
Jehovah's hand high is preferr'd.

## 9.

Jehovah's right hand doth prevail!  
I shall die, but to live, and declare  
His works! tho' He chasten'd me sore,  
Yet from conquest by death did He spare.

## 10.

Gates of righteousness, ope for me wide!  
To go in and Jehovah extol.  
Lo! here's of Jehovah the gate  
For the righteous to use, and be whole.

11.

I'll extol Thee, for me hast Thou heard.  
 My very salvation Thou art!  
 The stone which the builders refus'd,  
 For the head corner-stone's set apart.

12.

From Jehovah this act doth proceed,  
 And marvellous 'tis in our eyes.  
 'Tis the day which Jehovah hath made,  
 To be lauded and lov'd by the wise.

13.

Thee, Jehovah, we ask us to save—  
 Yea, to prosper us Thee we beseech.  
 In the Name of Jehovah there comes  
 One to Whom we shall utter this speech

14.

From the house of Jehovah! Lo! God's  
 The Jehovah this light on us shed!  
 Let the sacrifice, held safe with cords,<sup>1</sup>  
 To the horns of the altar be led!

15.

Thou, Thou, art my God! Thee I'll praise—  
 My God, Whom I'll praise evermore!  
 To Jehovah—the Good One<sup>2</sup>—give thanks,  
 For His mercy doth ever endure!

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 27. Hos. xi. 4; John x. 17—18.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 29. Matth. xix. 17.

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## PSALM CXIX.

## ARGUMENT.

This hundred and nineteenth psalm is constructed with peculiar care. It is divided into as many sections or stanzas of eight verses as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet; namely, twenty-two.

Also every verse of the eight in each section begins with the letter proper to that section.

Thus the eight verses of this first section begin with Aleph.

It is supposed that this artifice was resorted to for the purpose of helping the learner to keep the several verses in memory.

Where each verse contains, as is the case here, its meaning within itself, the omission of one here or there would escape notice, were it not for some such contrivance as this.

Great pains must have been taken by the author, whoever he was, to make a psalm of twenty-two stanzas of eight lines each with these restrictions. Still, these very pains shew that he himself valued highly what he aimed at communicating in this form; and we, on seeing this, may well allow ourselves to be influenced by a similar feeling to that of Moses, who, upon observing how the bush burned with fire, and was not consumed, said, I will now turn to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.

Since this carefully constructed psalm is handed down to us under the solemn sanction of inspiration, it cannot be irreverent to apply the purpose to which God put the burning bush to that which the psalmist here put his elaborate use of the Hebrew alphabet.

Since this psalm was written under the guidance of Divine inspiration, God is in the midst of it, as surely as in the burning bush. There is a legitimate use of curiosity as well as a perversion of it. Various means are shewn in Scripture to be allowable to be resorted to, and indeed needful to be resorted to, for promotion of a spirit of inquiry. Since we are so constituted by God, that out of regard for our freedom of will and moral responsibility He will not put such a constraint on us as would compel our assent to His teaching, but rather attract us to the pursuit of virtue, by awakening within us of a willingness to inquire after what is for our truest and everlasting interests to decide on. Sometimes we see our curiosity benevolently appealed to for this purpose in the pages of holy writ by use of contraries in an apparently irreconcilable statement, such as that in Isa. lv. 1, where that prophet, by the impulse of the power of the Spirit, exclaims, "Ho! . . . let him that hath no money come buy and eat, without money and without price."

If the hearer of this call cares to learn how he can buy without money, he will assuredly hear of something to his advantage, fitted to be of unspeakable profit to him; whereas, if he be apathetic, and allow it to fall on his ear in listlessness, the more the pity, when God has made a gracious endeavour to render the learning of a needful lesson attractive.

In men's manner of receiving these gracious endeavours on the part of God to stir their curiosity for their good, they shew their moral responsibility.

After these prefatory remarks, let us pass to contemplation of the contents of this first section.

It may be regarded as an introductory statement of the subject treated of in the sections that follow; namely, the pursuit of godliness; the way to set about which is to walk by the rule of God's law, whence comes blessedness, which, in Rom. iv. 6, St. Paul testifies to be more than justification, being that and sanctification too, which is meetness for that rest with God to be entered on after death.

The "law of the Lord," as used in the first verse, is a comprehensive term, including all the revelation of God in holy Scripture. Thus, in John xii. 34, when the Jews said to Jesus, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth alway," they referred to the prophetic part of the Scripture.

So, too, in 1 Cor. xiv. 21, we read, "In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people, yet for all that will they not hear Me, saith the Lord." But this is written in Isa. xxviii. 11, 12. By the word 'law,' so understood, it can be shewn that those who put it in practice to the best of their ability, in reliance on the covenant of promise are "undefiled in the way."

It would be impossible for fallen man to be undefiled in the way, were that way to consist in the law alone, moral and ceremonial.

Accordingly, 'law' must be here taken in its more comprehensive sense, or otherwise Scripture would be made to contradict itself, which none are permitted to do.

The next verse contains a term for one subordinate part of law in this comprehensive sense. This word is "testimonies," or sentences which bear witness to what God threatens against sin, or promises in reward of faith. There are five other terms for different parts of the law of God found in this first section; these are, God's "way, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments"—seven in number—a number according to Scripture usage expressive of perfection.

Precepts are rules for a believer's individual guidance.

Statutes are rules of a positive character for a people collectively.

Commandments are properly the moral—of the two tables of duty to God and to our neighbour.

Judgments may have a distinctive meaning by being supposed to warn one of the Divine sanction, wherewith all that God appoints, shall be enforced.

The term "way" denotes the manner in which the several parts of the law are to be reduced to practice, in order that we may be saved. In this sense we find the word used in sundry places of Scripture, as, for instance, in Acts ix. 2, where we read, "Saul desired of the high priest letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

If we bear in mind these meanings of the several parts of the law, what a conception of a believer's service does this first section hold up to view!

What care in seeking cleanness of heart by renewal with the Holy Ghost, as by the washing of water through the word (Eph. v. 26, 27), is implied in their description, "undefiled in the way." It reminds one of those words in Isa. xxxv. 8, concerning the way of holiness, on which the unclean cannot walk, but on which the wayfaring man, though in the estimation of the world a fool, shall not err!

What decision of character in this profession of religion is implied in the description at the second verse that "they seek God with their whole heart."

With less resolution than this they are not to be reckoned to keep God's testimonies, which have been explained as bearing witness to the terrors hanging over the heads of those that slight His law, and the blessedness of those that make much of the least of His commandments. (Matt. v. 19.)

What a practical character is ascribed in verse 3 to the profession of religion by these undefiled in the way; to wit, that "they do righteousness:" just as the beloved disciple, in 1 John iii. 7, saith, "Little children, let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He—Jesus—is righteous."

Then, in verse 4, what a seasonable incentive to diligence in this duty is supplied us in the words, "Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently."

With dutiful children even their earthly parents' word is law (Prov. i. 8), how much more then ought God's to be with His children! How opportunely hereupon follows that commendation of a social position exempted from all stress upon one's willingness to live honestly, implied in the words, "O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!"

Again, in the sixth verse, what seasonable diversification of incentive to diligence herein is contained in the suggestion, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments." Agreeably wherewith the beloved disciple

said in 1 John ii. 28, "Little children abide in Christ, that when He shall appear, we may have confidence; and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Then again, what a lowly ascription of the soul's health to God is contained in the seventh verse, where the teaching of God's Spirit is declared to be that which fits one to praise Him. And this rehearsal of filial dutifulness concludes with a becoming confession of unworthiness if God should be strict to mark defects in service, where it is said at verse 8, "I will keep Thy statutes, O forsake me not utterly;" implying that all one's strength to please God in the way of His law is owing to Christ being with one; and that we have no claim to Christ's continuance with us but that of His own mercy.

## 1.

Ye undefil'd ones in the way how blest  
Are ye, that do Jehovah's law obey!  
They that His testimonies keep, in quest  
Of Him with their whole heart, blest too are they!  
Iniquity they shun, and in His way  
Walk onward. But Thou hast commandment laid  
On us to heed Thy precepts day by day,  
Oh<sup>1</sup> that my ways were so straightforward made  
That I might keep Thy statutes! then my head  
I'd lift unblushing, when with like respect  
All Thy commandments I had honoured.  
With uprightness of heart will I direct  
Praise unto Thee, once that (as I expect)  
I've learn't Thy righteous judgments! Steadfastly  
Will I Thy<sup>2</sup> statutes keep. Leave me not utterly.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 5. מִשְׁתַּחֲוִי a word, as Dr. Burgh observes, only here and in 2 Kings v. 3. Etymology uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 8. As distinctions in meaning are ascribed to seven of these words at least, included under "law," it must be desirable to retain them in this phrase exactly as the psalmist has used them.

It has been observed that in the sixteenth ode of the 3rd Book, Horace has employed eleven different synonyms for money. But it appears by this hundred and nineteenth psalm that this device for extolling the preciousness of one's theme was known at a much earlier date.



SECOND SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—BETH.

ARGUMENT.

As the foregoing portion was supposed to contain a preliminary statement of the subject of the psalm; to wit, the way to lead a religious life, that subject is here practically entered on by inquiring what one should do to this end in the morning of life.

It has been observed that none are so stable and tranquil withal in their religious attainments as those who, like Timothy, that from a child knew the holy Scriptures, have walked with God from their youth onward. Dr. Watts expressed this idea in the well-known lines:—

'Twill save us from a thousand snares  
To mind religion young;  
Grace will improve our following years,  
And make our virtue strong.

Such a youth was Daniel, as we know from the book bearing his name; and some have deemed this psalm to be his composition. Be that as it may, much vividness will be imparted to our conceptions of the successive portions of this psalm by thinking that they set forth his bosom-feelings.

That enquiry, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" has its answer in the latter clause, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." If it be thought that because the writer lived under the Mosaic dispensation he understood by "cleansing" that alone which was outward in the flesh, they would be convicted of doing him wrong by his fervent protestation in the next verse—

"With my whole heart have I sought Thee!  
O let me not wander from Thy commandments!"

In making this protestation unto Him that seeth in secret, the writer shews how well he knew that "man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart" (1 Sam. xvi. 7), and that the wise man had said in Prov. iv. 23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

It shews also how deeply he was persuaded that God would have the whole heart or none; for that we "cannot serve God and Mammon." (Matth. vi. 24.) "The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James i. 8.)

"If the eye be single the whole body—the natural man (Rom. vii. 18—shall be full of light."

At the same time, by the latter clause it is clear that the psalmist did not assume to himself the ordering of his heart aright, but

understood that it was to be yielded to God in Christ for his guidance of it unto that end, as Jeremiah testified in chap. x. 23.

"O Lord I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Therefore the psalmist makes this youth say—

"O let me not wander from Thy commandments."

His next petition is—

"Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee!"

Here is given an instance of the contrariety to be experienced in his heart, which made it needful for him to invoke the help of God. The hiding or laying up of God's word in the heart denotes the young man's desire, on his awakening, to conceal from others its agitation on the subject of religion, while pursuing the cleansing of his ways by the word in secrecy. (Eph. v. 26.) It shews also that the psalmist regarded the word of Scripture, as used by his spirit, "the candle of the Lord searching all the inward parts of the belly." (Prov. xx. 27.) For that word brought the will of God to mind, and prevented the heart from inclining one to its own way through ignorance.

The next verse shews the great encouragement such a youth will derive from that recourse to God's word as in His sight. In the gladness of his heart at help received in answer to his single-eyed petition he exclaims, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord! Teach me Thy statutes!" make me more and more to understand wisdom secretly.

The Apostle Paul tells us (1 Cor. xii. 4) that no man can intelligently call Jesus the Christ but by the Holy Ghost. And the Lord Jesus says, "No man can come to Me except the Father, Who hath sent Me, draw him." (John vi. 44.) And in Isa. liii. 1, it is testified that what he had to report needed to be revealed to one that should believe it.

As also St. Paul testified in Gal. i. 16, saying, "When it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." The Father "hides His truth from the wise and prudent—that is, withholds from them the grace wherewith to open their understandings, but He reveals it unto babes." (Matt. xi. 25.)

Thus, "except we be converted, and become as little children"—teachable—dependent on God for what we need to learn concerning His salvation—"we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.)

The next verse shews the growth of this youth in grace, where he saith, "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Thy mouth." Agreeably wherewith St. Paul saith, (Rom. x. 10) "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Thus what the psalmist at first "hid" is in due time avowed, "waxing bold," like Paul and Barnabas in Acts xiii. 46.

In the next verse, evidence is given of the practical nature of this youth's religious profession. For him to have said, "I have rejoiced in Thy commandments," might only have implied that he felt much pleasure in the intellectual exercise of discourse upon them: whereas to say, "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy commandments," indicated happiness in the practice of them. For this is the force of way in the first verse, in the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?"

How genuine too that happiness which could be compared with what he might have in all riches. (Ps. iv. 6, 7.) We are sure that one, speaking by the Spirit of God would not permit his profession to exceed what at the time present he actually felt, or could with truth assert concerning his habit of mind.

How happy then must this young man have been, who could thus take God for his shield and exceeding great reward (Gen. xv. 1), relinquishing the gifts he was in this life fitted to enjoy, for enjoyment of communion with the Giver!

In the 15th and 16th verses, the psalmist shews how this is to be sustained.

First saying, "I will meditate on Thy precepts, and have respect unto Thy ways."

Precepts have already been explained to be maxims on morality and virtue for observance by individuals in private. One means then of sustaining a youth's soul in lively communion with God, the writer of this psalm found to be, habitual meditation on His precepts; whereby to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, so as to extract refreshment in spirit from them.

"Respect unto God's ways" herein, denotes the same as in the two preceding instances; namely, heed to the practice of His precepts.

Secondly, on the words, "I will delight myself in Thy statutes, I will not forget Thy word," it is to be remembered that "statutes" were explained in the former portion to mean "Divine rules to be observed by the congregation in their corporate capacity, whether civil or religious."

Observance of this part of religion must be combined with that of the preceding, in order to maintain in youth that happiness in religion described in verse 14.

To distinguish between the private maxims which may be meditated in one's closet, and content oneself with observance of these, to the neglect of those rules for attendance on public worship and participation of the Lord's Supper, which have an usefulness of their own, is sure to produce in youth declension from God.

In Isa. lvii. 13, it was said on this point, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor

finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself greatly in the Lord." Now what a youth wants in order to make the practice of true heart-felt religion pleasant, is to have delight in it. Then will God's commandments, how arduous soever to flesh and blood, be on no account deemed "grievous." (1 John v. 3.)

Behold then the means whereby this "delight" is to be attained—observance of the Lord's statutes—"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. x. 25.)

The youth who confines his religion to meditation in private on the Divine precepts will stand alone: and the wise man saith, (Eccles. iv. 10), "Woe to him that standeth alone, when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."

But in Prov. xxvi. 17—19, we read: "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." "Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat of the fruit thereof; so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured." "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." And again: "A brother is born for adversity." (Prov. xvii. 17.)

There is occasionally an advantage in stating a proposition and its converse—what one shall do and what one shall not—to the same end. It is by no means mere redundancy; but sometimes serves to point out the quarter whence danger is more particularly to be apprehended. Hence in this instance, the clause "I will not forget Thy word," has great significance as a supplement to the former clause. For much of the evil ensuing upon neglect of public worship—neglect of the Lord's table, and other duties enjoined in the congregation collectively by statute—is owing to the religious young man's allowing himself to forget that these ordinances have their warrant in God's word; and therefore ought on no account to be slighted in comparison with meditation on the Divine precepts in private, which are observed because of being grounded on the like warrant. Very distinct caution against forgetfulness on this point, as the door by which the enemy to the religious youth's soul may enter in, where that enemy could not obtain the young man's deliberate consent to neglect of God's statutes, is to be seen in Deut. iv. 9, and viii. 11.

Only when Christ's word abides in us, does He abide in us; and if He depart, we can bear no fruit to perfection. (John xv. 4.) The several verses of this portion (though each one comprises its meaning within itself) are hereby shewn to have a bearing upon one subject—the right entrance of an awakened youth, such as was Daniel, upon the profession of true religion.

And although the arduousness of this performance of duty toward God is hereby apparent, yet the happiness to ensue thereon is abundantly shewn.

2.

His way how shall a young man surely cleanse ?  
 Steadfast respect to Thy word let him pay.  
 My whole heart doth for Thee yearn with intense  
 Devotion : Oh incline me not to stray  
 From Thy commandments. Carefully I lay  
 Thy word<sup>1</sup> up in my heart, lest I 'gainst Thee  
 Should sin, Jehovah ! Be Thou blest alway !  
 Teach me Thy statutes ! I have faithfully  
 Declared all Thy judgments. In the way  
 Of Thy pure testimonies, daily I,  
 As in all riches, find unfeigned joy ;  
 My thoughts upon Thy precepts I'll employ,  
 And to Thy ways attention strict apply !  
 At all times with Thy statutes pleas'd I'll be,  
 Nor leave Thy word to slip from me unheedingly.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 11. אִמְרֹתֶיךָ "The word of promise." See this full expression at verse 123, "The word of Thy righteousness." See too Ainsworth's note on this word in Ps. cxxxviii. 2.

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THIRD SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—GIMEL.

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ARGUMENT.

In this third portion the psalmist enters on a new stage of his subject ; which we have supposed to be, how he himself in the morning of life, should enter aright, or had so entered, on the profession of religion.

This he is considered to set forth in the second portion. And now, in the third, he first prays for the Lord's liberal dealing with him ; not that he may employ himself in pursuit of worldly prosperity, but in consistent maintenance of that religious profession on which he had entered.

The words to this effect are : "Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live, and keep Thy word."

He then appears to specify six hindrances to his endeavour after performance of his undertaking.

Of these hindrances, and their discouraging effects on his natural temperament, he had already, young as he was, had painful experience.

The hindrance first mentioned is that in the 18th verse, arising from those providential dealings with one, wherewith (as appears from "law," taken in its most comprehensive sense) God wondrously chastens those whom He loves. These dealings on God's part with His servants are apt to make them repine and be weary of their service. (Ps. lxxxiii.)

David was tempted thereto when Uzzah was slain for stretching forth his hand to keep the Ark of God steady on the cart. (2 Sam. vi. 8.)

So too was Elijah when the son of the woman of Sarepta, with whom he sojourned, died: for he thereupon exclaimed in a complaining tone, "O Lord my God, hast Thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" (1 Kings xvii. 20.)

Now this impatience at God's providential dealings with one, while obediently following His service, may be seen in His "law" (when by it is meant the Scripture) to have been a temporary snare to some of God's most eminent servants. The providential dealing, of which they complain, appears in their eyes to be "wondrous;" as was the case with the disciples of the Lord Jesus, of whom it is recorded in Luke xviii. 34, that when their beloved Master, Whom they fully believed, in saying that He was the Christ, told them of His approaching death at the Passover in Jerusalem to which they were following Him: "They understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." These words emphatically express their impatience: yea, so offensive to them was this thought of their Master's ignominious death, that they would not, even when learning it from His own lips, ask Him to explain Himself more fully—they would not pray, as doth the psalmist here in verse 18, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law;" to wit, the wondrous thing, that "Christ ought to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory." (Luke xxiv. 26.)

Such an affliction of their Master, in which they instinctively perceived that they would be involved, seemed to them to be a dealing with them not in correspondence with their duteous service, and they shrank from attainment of His own proof of that "wondrous thing out of God's law."

Now that which temporarily so hindered Christ's disciples from hearty conformity with God's word was "the veil" spoken of by St. Paul in 2 Cor. iv. 3, where he saith, "But if our Gospel too be veiled, it is veiled to them that are lost—that is, astray from the Good Shepherd—in whom (seeing that they believe not) the God of this world (taking advantage of that unbelief) hath blinded their eyes—that is, has enticed their carnal nature to usurp the sway within them—that the light of the glorious gos-

pel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine into them."

That communication which the Lord Jesus confidentially granted the disciples concerning His then approaching death was indeed "the light of the glorious gospel of God"—"a wondrous thing out of God's law!"

Nevertheless, without illumination by the Spirit of Christ, the disciples of Jesus, in the face of so much tribulation, could not see that glory in it; and the illumination would not be granted, except they asked for it in their difficulty; but owing to their unbelief they would not ask for it; consequently, by withdrawal of God's help, corrupt nature, actuated by "the spirit which ruleth in the children of disobedience," (Ephes. ii. 2), spread a veil, as it were, over the eyes of their understanding—that veil which the psalmist here in verse 18 asks God to remove off his eyes; and which in Isa. xxv. 7, we read of as "spread over the face of all nations,"—which Isaiah there announces that Christ should at His Father's bidding die to take away from off all nations. For according to Scriptural phraseology, God is said to remove that veil which He dissipates by its corrective, as morning mists are dispersed by the risen sun. And Christ's meritorious sacrifice opens the way for full free bestowal of God's Spirit on him who believes in Christ Jesus, whereby that veil above spoken of is dissipated.

The second hindrance against which the psalmist prays is found in the 19th verse, where his words are: "I am a stranger upon earth, hide not Thy commandments from me."

The psalmist seems here to pray for help against the unsettling effect of expatriation on the pious mind of a youth like Daniel, which cut him off from access to public worship. What brief acquaintance we may have had with the hindrance in religious profession occasioned, even in our own land, by such comparatively small trials, as unsettling of our means of livelihood, or place of abode, will help us to understand the arduousness of captivity in a heathen land, in addition to the foregoing.

Against these accumulated consequences in a worldly sense, of being "a stranger," a youth like Daniel could only bear up by God's bestowal of grace in accordance with His word.

Help against the third hindrance is sought of God in verse 20 as follows: "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to Thy judgments at all times."

This "breaking" of the soul is its failing in fortitude when "crushed,"<sup>1</sup> as it were, by interruptions of a mortifying nature, demanding one's instant attention, so as to exclude one from the much desired leisure to study or meditate on God's judgments.

The fourth hindrance is prayed against in these words at verse

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 20. In Lam. iii. 16, this word for "break" is used to denote crushing as with stones.

21: "Thou hast rebuked the proud, that are cursed: which do err from Thy Commandments."

Here, as it seems to me, the tendency of a young believer to meet the ill-nature of jeerers with a defiant spirit of antagonism is dreaded. For to indulge this fierceness would be to contend in the Lord's service with carnal weapons: whereas, as St. Paul saith, in 2 Cor. x. 4, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." Also in Ps. xxxi. 23, we read, "God plentifully rewardeth the proud doer"—that is, gives him of the fruit of his doings.

For in the clause going before it is said, "He preserveth the faithful," so that the proud worker is here cited in opposition to the faithful one.

For "with the lowly is wisdom."

It must, however, be acknowledged that galling opposition has a dangerous tendency to hurry one into proud resistance. For in Eccles. vii. 7, it is written, "Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad."

The fifth hindrance is that produced by reproach and contempt; which usually falls the heavier on one, who is perceived to be averse from repelling it in the like spirit.

In Prov. xvi. 7, is to be found one of those "testimonies" to which the psalmist may be supposed to have referred, when pleading while under reproach and contempt, "I have kept Thy testimonies."

In the passage out of Proverbs above referred to, it is written, "When a man's ways please the Lord He maketh even His enemies to be at peace with him."

The sixth hindrance against which the psalmist, as a young man, seeks help in profession of religion, is that discouragement produced by constant subjection to disdainful treatment and taunting by princes; which was exactly the case with Daniel, but as an antidote to that discouragement he pleads his meditation on the Lord's statutes.

In St. Paul's description of the Christian soldier's whole armour, faith so exercised is likened to a shield wherewith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Thus would Daniel, by God's help, in regard to irritation at the jeers of princes sitting over against him, "quench it in the stillness of his deeper thought."

In conclusion the psalmist adds, "Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors."

These verses so explained are evidently linked together, and that too in harmony with what has been assumed to be the subject of the entire psalm, namely, the way how to lead a religious life, from youth.



## 3.

O with Thy servant bountifully deal !  
 I'll live and keep Thy word ! Ope Thou mine eyes,  
 And wondrous things out of Thy law<sup>1</sup> reveal !  
 On earth I am a stranger ; in nowise  
 Hide Thy commandments from me ! Sympathies  
 At all times with Thy judgments move my soul !  
 The proud, that are accurs'd, dost Thou chastise,  
 Who Thy commandments break ; then from me roll  
 Reproach and withering contempt away,  
 For I've Thy testimonies kept ! yea too  
 Princes did sit and charges 'gainst me lay,  
 While I Thy servant, with devotion true,  
 Did in Thy statutes meditate that day.  
 Thy testimonies too are my delight,  
 With these hold I converse to counsel me aright.

## FOURTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—DALETH.

## ARGUMENT.

The bearing of the eight verses in this portion on one another, and the harmony thereof with the preceding portions, will be apparent after examination of the verses in their order.

In the first of these verses, where the psalmist saith, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust ; quicken Thou me according to Thy word," we are reminded, that in the soul is seated the reasoning faculty and conscience, whereby man exercises free-will and incurs moral responsibility.

The soul when first coming from the Creator is pure ; but being by Him joined in the mother's womb to a body of flesh and blood in which, according to the course of nature, descends the taint of original sin, is, as St. Paul testifies in Rom. vii. 14, "sold under sin." In other words, by reason of "the motions of sin" in the body with which it is in union (Rom. vii. 5) the soul is enticed from its own pure impulses.

This St. Paul describes in Rom. vii. 21, saying, "I find in me a law, that when I would do good"—in my soul—"evil is present with me"—in my body—"for I delight in the law of God after

<sup>1</sup> If it be correctly assumed that the different synonyms for "law" were used by the psalmist in their distinctive senses, it is important that they should be carefully retained in the paraphrase.

the inward man"—the soul—"but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind (that which in the inward man I delight to do), and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin"—in my members—law here meaning any systematic course of operation.

Now, St. Paul explicitly tells us (Rom. iii 21—26 and v. 1—11) how God, foreseeing man's fall from original righteousness, provided for him a way of recovery through the sacrificial death of His Lamb, through which cometh universal redemption.

It hence follows, that the Father, notwithstanding His hatred of sin, can without disparagement of His justice help by light in the soul those, wheresoever they may be, who by their obedience to the dictates of conscience please Him. For "Christ is the true light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world." (John i. 9.)

This help then is received from God through Christ in heathen lands by the same rule that light in their consciences was given them at their birth, though they knew not how. But those whose birth is providentially ordered where the Scriptures are within their reach and faithfully expounded, are to be authoritatively certified by Christ's ministers of this help in Christ being procurable by them from the Father for only asking it of Him in the Name of the Lamb His Son.

The outward and visible signs hereof in our privileged age of the Church are baptism and the Lord's supper; which are to be administered to females as well as males that believe in Jesus, and to their children (Acts ii. 39); whereas in the earlier dispensation by Moses the like grace was appointed to be certified to the male children alone in the congregation by circumcision. What the psalmist then means (who had this seal in his flesh) by saying, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust," is this: "I am distressed by the sway which the motions of sins in my flesh are on the point of gaining over my soul; and I claim, according to the covenant sealed by circumcision, that quickening of my soul with the Spirit of Christ according to promise, which shall enable my soul on yielding to Christ to rise superior to this proclivity to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." (1 John ii. 15—17.)

In this way the psalmist clearly sought of God power, wherewith to will that which is good and acceptable to Him: at the same time, by reason of being sold under sin, he had by nature freedom of will for that which was of the earth, earthy.

Thus freedom to do evil remains with us since Adam's fall, but freedom to do good is, through the universal redemption of mankind by Christ, recovered by the believer's yielding of himself up to Christ—thus taking His yoke upon him, that he may gain "perfect freedom." (Matt. xi. 28—30; also Second Collect for Peace, Evening Prayer.)

In the next verse he says, "I have declared my ways, O teach me Thy statutes:" by which words he may be considered to intimate, that to the prayer in the former verse he had added confessions of sin because of that inward strife, of which some divines encourage their disciples to take no account: but for which St. Paul, in Rom. vii. 24, exclaimed, "O wretched man, that I am!" St. Paul, by writing this confession, made it public to his own humiliation and the glory of God, as also doth the psalmist here. (See Dan. ix. 3—20.) Although the strife, he confessed, was within his own breast, and had not broken out into overt act, he calls its motions "his ways;" shewing that he did not confine himself alone to confession of ceremonial sins, but heart-sins; as we are taught to do in Matt. xv. 19.

The psalmist's conclusion, that God had heard him, was not gathered from any audible voice, but from reflection on the fact, that the thing he asked for, being known only to God and himself, his gaining of the refreshment in soul that he desired was evidence to him of his prayer having reached the ear of the unseen God and been accepted.

In adding thereupon "Teach me Thy statutes," he would seem to imply, that this duty of confession to the extent here intimated is only taught of God; for it is very humiliating to men eminent for holiness, as were Daniel and Paul, to be seen by their brethren admitting the plague of their own hearts (1 Kings viii. 38), and "calling upon God," like other sinners, to wash them lest they die. (Isa. lxiv. 5—7, and Ps. xiv. 4—6.)

The psalmist seems by implication to call this manner of confession to one's own self-abasement, even when eminent for holiness, "a statute" of His sanctuary—in the sense already explained, as meaning an ordinance to be observed by men collectively in the congregation.

For as is written in Prov. xxviii. 13, "he that covereth his transgression shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh it, shall find mercy." (Job xxxi. 33; James v. 16.)

The psalmist being, as he intimates, comforted by thus stirring up himself to "call upon God" in his confession before his brethren, gratefully records his persuasion, that there are sundry other "statutes" of God's true tabernacle, which He alone can teach, to fit one for His service.

After this he adds, in the 27th verse,—

"Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts; so shall I talk of Thy wondrous works."

The "precepts" have already been shewn to be distinguished from the "statutes," as being Divine rules of life for persons taken singly. Also, "the way" of the precepts has been shewn to be the practice of them as contra-distinguished from the profession of them.

God alone knows how to "make a soul understand," or "perceive and know" what it ought to do. For He "speaks to the heart by the light of His holy Spirit."

Also by dreams God wakens up the soul to a sense of "what He would have done by us," (see Coll. for the 20th Sun. after Trin.) as He did with Jacob in Gen. xxxviii. 16, and with Solomon, in 1 Kings iii. 15, and Job xxxiii. 14.

While therefore the former petition for instruction in the "statutes," referred to the building up one's soul in union with the brethren by confession of one's frailty in their hearing, this in verse 27 refers to Divine help in the secrecy of inward sanctification.

The closing words, "So shall I talk of Thy wondrous works," imply that the psalmist was careful not to speak of progress in holiness beyond what he felt.

As an honest man he would not do this; and as one inspired to write for the Church of God, he would not seek the praise of men when constrained to speak of his advance in "the way" of God's precepts; but would so speak as to give the glory to God, calling what advance he really made one of God's "wondrous works." (Isa. xxvii. 12, John v. 44.)

Again he takes up the language of confession in the 28th verse, saying:—

"My soul melteth for heaviness; strengthen Thou me according to Thy word."

Here is another infirmity of the soul different from that of "cleaving to the dust."

Heaviness soon degenerates into displeasure unless it be contended against, as does the psalmist here. See 1 Kings xx. 43, xxi. 4. God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. ix. 7. The joy of the Lord is our strength Neh. viii. 10. In Christ ye greatly rejoice, saith St. Peter, 1 Epist. i. 6, "though now, for a season, if need be, in heaviness through manifold temptations."

The psalmist in praying "strengthen Thou me according to Thy word," virtually prayed for help in his soul against this frailness likewise, according to the covenant sealed by circumcision, as was explained in verse 25.

St. Paul in Rom. v. 6, shews what far greater help have we Christians to receive "strength" of soul through faith, because of the mystery of God concerning the sacrificial death of Christ for the redemption of all mankind having been accomplished at His crucifixion; but in the psalmist's day the congregation of the Lord had abundant encouragement to ask for this strengthening of soul according to His word, because knowing that God will not disappoint, or lie unto "them that come unto Him in His appointed way." (Heb. vi. 13—20.)

The next verse may denote what the psalmist regarded as a

consequence of this "heaviness," when not cast off; namely, that it kept his soul back from lively faith wherewith "to serve the living God," Heb. ix. 14—its words being "Remove from me the way of lying, and grant me Thy love graciously."

In so ancient a language as the Hebrew, a comparatively few words are made to serve many collateral uses besides the direct one.

A lie is primarily an intentional departure from truth; but subordinately it in Scripture includes what one does to disappoint another's lawful expectation. In Prov. xix. 22, the desire of a poor man is contrasted with that of a rich man, and in consequence thereof the poor man who could not help an applicant, "is better" than the rich man who can, and wont: hence he is called "a liar," though he only disappoint the applicant. Compare Jer. xv. 18.

The psalmist therefore prays that he may be kept from disappointing God, after the manner in which the Lord Jesus declares the fig-tree to have disappointed its owner, in Luke xiii. 7.

The psalmist prays that the poverty of his heart-service may not give the lie to the "much love with his mouth," (Ezek. xxxiii. 31,) he calls it "the way of lying;" denoting that it "lies" because of the practice falling so far behind the profession.

"The law granted of grace," cannot be the law of the ten commandments "holy, just, and good," by which cometh the knowledge of sin and of condemnation with the Spirit of bondage; but rather it is a variation in description of what had already been asked for in verse 25, as "quickening according to God's word," and in verse 28, as "strengthening according to the same." It is therefore to be considered the same with what St. Paul in Rom. viii. 2, calls "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes one free from the law of sin and death," to wit, from the motions of sins in one's members. In the next verse the psalmist further seeks strengthening of soul by calling to mind his good resolution on this head; saying, "I have chosen the way of Thy truth, Thy judgments have I laid before me."

Truth must be here regarded as a special antidote to the "lying" that should be removed.

As that was disappointment of God, this must be acceptable, though not perfect, service.

Just as an arrow launched at a target hitting the bull's eye, is said to be "true" to the mark, and the bolt of a lock when smoothly delivered into the place for receiving it, is said to be true; so "truth" here means, work in the spirit of one's profession: "the way of truth" being specially expressive hereof.

While to "lay the judgments of God before one," denotes honesty in acquainting oneself with the best means of knowing what God would have one do "in truth."

For many are seen to act up to their conscience, who are shy

of having their conscience instructed in the judgment of God's word, (Luke xviii. 31—34,) whereas we ought not only to act up to our conscience, but to take every proper step for the instruction of our conscience in the word of God. (John vi. 67—69.)

Now, although the works of the believer in God are acceptable through faith alone, while those of the moralist that honestly strives to reform himself, are done in reliance on his own strength of mind, such a true believer, as was the psalmist, does not labour less in the work given him to do than does the moralist: in fact the labour of the believer includes that of the moralist, or rather presupposes it; but differs in the motive for which he undertakes it, and the ground whereon he relies for victory.

When a moralist desires to reform himself in regard to some vices—say that of drunkenness—he knows that the world will not admit that he has reformed himself so long as in one instance he relapses.

When, therefore, having made a secret resolve, either to abstain altogether from fermented drinks, or to be careful against taking more on any occasion than a certain specified quantity, he finds himself solicited by companions to take more, it is of great use to him to remember inwardly, what he has chosen to do.

In like manner the believer must be as firmly bent on his own reformation as is the moralist; only he has been taught, that reformation is not renewal; but he is sure that after having at baptism his regeneration in Christ certified to him, it will be in vain for him to ask for renewal, unless he be quite as resolved on reformation, as the moralist can be.

Hence it is useful for him to recal to mind, as doth the psalmist here, "I have chosen the way of truth."

In the same spirit the psalmist proceeded further on to say in verse 31.

"I have stuck unto Thy testimonies," meaning, since I chose the way of honest behaviour towards Thee in the spirit of what I profess, and not merely outward conformity to the letter thereof, I have had in former seasons of faintness sharp conflict within my soul, during which through grace "I have stuck to Thy testimonies;" which are so called because bearing witness to what comes of relapsing into sin. Gal. v. 19—21, Ephes. v. 3—6. Be not therefore, O Lord, weary of my soul's faintness; so as to depart from me, often as I leave Thee; for then, would'st Thou in effect "put me to shame."

In the 32nd verse the psalmist concludes this section with saying in a cheerful frame indicative of being heard (verse 26,) "I will run—or proceed cheerfully onward—in the way of Thy commandments (without thinking them grievous, (1 John v. 3,) when Thou hast enlarged my heart:" that is, made love of Thee bear sway within me.

These verses so explained are clearly bearing on the same

subject, which also bears on that of the preceding section. There the hindrances prayed against were from without, here from within. Furthermore these two portions so explained harmonize with what has been assumed to be the subject of the entire psalm.

Now many enquirers among us after the way to serve God in the gospel of His Son, seem to behave as if reception of the single doctrine "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," was enough; whereas by these two portions they may see, that when we are awakened to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter on an arduous struggle in the soul against inbred sin, by daily prayer for renewal, according to God's word—the perils contended against being partly excited in ourselves by assaults from without, and partly by lust assailing us from within.

Now though in this Christian country we may not ordinarily have to contend against the hindrances from without mentioned in the third portion, as had Daniel and his fellow captives in Babylon, we all must own to need of contending against these from within; wherefore the example of the psalmist, and the, so to speak, unbosoming of himself in his communion with God in this fourth portion, must be of great importance to us all.

4.

My soul cleaves to the dust, O quicken me  
According to Thy word: my ways have I  
Declar'd, and Thou hast heard me! graciously  
Teach me Thy statutes! In the way of Thy  
Precepts instruct me; so I'll openly  
Talk of Thy wondrous works! my soul alas  
Melteth for heaviness! Do Thou supply  
Strength, as Thou 'st promis'd. From me make to  
pass  
The way of lying; and Thy law, of grace,  
Grant Thou to me! time past the way I took  
Of truth, and did Thy judgments 'fore me place.  
Lo! to Thy testimonies have I stuck,  
Jehovah! put me not unto rebuke!  
Once that t'enlarge my heart Thou hast begun,  
The way of Thy commandments will I gladly run!

## FIFTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—HE.

## ARGUMENT.

The two portions, next before this, contained petitions for the averting of evil, but this direct supplications for good.

With the psalmist the Scriptures answered all the purposes that he needed in the matter of his enquiry, provided only the Spirit of Christ were vouchsafed to teach him their voice.

If such was their value in the psalmist's day, how much more ought we to think the like of them in ours, when the books of some of the later prophets, and all the New Testament, have been added to them.

In this matter of direct service unto God, equally with that of contending against hindrances thereto from without and within, the psalmist makes it plain that he depended not on his own ability to learn God's will set forth in His statutes, but craved that he might be taught of God, Who alone teaches so effectually as to enable a believer by faith in that word to overcome the world. For as John saith (1 Epist. v. 4), "whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world."

Except, therefore, the faith we have within be begotten of God, it cannot outlast the trials to be encountered.

In the same sense St. Peter, in 1 Epist. i. 21, saith that "by the power of Christ we believe in God, Who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory."

For a distinction is to be observed between that natural faith wherewith, when drawn by the Father's grace, we believe in the Gospel, and that faith which is the gift of Christ's spirit—a power wherein consists the Kingdom of God. (1 Cor. iv. 20.)

This is the sense in which the youthful psalmist prays:

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end."

He asked to be partaker in the power of God, accompanying the words of God's statutes. If there be this power attainable through them, how intimate is God's union with His word in Scripture! what a choice instrument is it in His hand for accomplishing His highest work—the recovery of backslidden man unto holiness! For this is a greater work than His creation of men—displaying more fully than heretofore the mercy and goodness of God.

The next petition is conceived in the same strain, where he prays—

"Give me understanding and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart."

Understanding of God's law is in Scripture placed not in the



head, but the heart : in other words, the will and temper have a great deal more to do with conformity thereto, than hath the intellectual faculty. (Prov. xiv. 33.)

One may know well enough what God would have Him do, yet for all that be indisposed to do it, owing to one's either being averse from it, or but half inclined to it : whereas God will not accept obedience done otherwise than with the whole heart.

The psalmist being aware of the Divine requirement in this respect, prays that there may be given him understanding, adding, "and I shall observe Thy law with my whole heart."

There is a clear distinction in the book of Proverbs between knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, which, so far as my observation goes, holds good throughout the rest of the Scripture. Knowledge denotes the intellectual apprehension of what is to be received from God. Wisdom, the choice of it with the heart. Understanding is cumulative upon the other two, being an insight into the weight of that word, which is to be obeyed ; in respect of the blessedness to ensue on one keeping it to the end, and the unspeakable misery of persistent and final opposition to it.

In this sense Job testifies, xxviii. 28—"Unto man God said, Behold the fear of the Lord—that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil—that is understanding."

Men in general are seen under certain circumstances to keep the law of God by knowledge alone of it ; that is to say, when there is no difficulty in so doing ; or, it may be, direct worldly advantage.

A more select number do the like out of knowledge and wisdom conjoined ; but none will do it under all circumstances and with the whole heart, save those who act from the three principles combined—knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. (Prov. xi. 10, 11 ; Col. i. 9.)

In the next petition, verse 35, the psalmist saith, "Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments ; for therein is my delight."

In the 33rd verse he had spoken of "the way"—the high road of God's statutes or ordinances for the congregation in general ; but here he speaks of the "path" of God's commandments—a "strait and narrow way"—not trod by the generality, but like the way of holiness mentioned by Isaiah xxxv. 8, on which the unclean cannot walk.

Nevertheless, at verse 96 of this psalm he saith, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." But, inasmuch as it is broad in respect of bringing within its scope all the thoughts of men's hearts, a comparatively small portion of the professed worshippers of God could be said to be walking in the path of God's commandments consistently with the requirements of such comprehensive commandments. If, indeed, the letter alone of the ten

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commandments had been given to be observed by Israel, the extent of their meaning would have been limited, and the keeping of them would have been comparatively attainable by the greater number; that is to say, if all that was needed to keep the commandments of either table, was to say —

“I have no God but one—the God of Israel.

“No image of Him, made by man, do I worship.

“I never invoke His Name falsely, when making oath;” and so forth—

the keeping of His commandments might well have been called, like that of His statutes at verse 48, “a way;” but when the commandments of the moral law can only be kept acceptably by him who loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself (Matt. xxii. 36—40); then, indeed, the observance of His commandments is a “path,” on which none can walk but they that have received of God a new heart and a right spirit. (Ps. li. 10.)

Thus, the broader the comprehension of the commandment, its extension is the narrower. The youthful psalmist here rendered unto God the protestation of one already endued with a new heart and a right spirit, when saying, “In the path of Thy commandments I delight.” Only to one begotten of God are His commandments not grievous at any time, as John testifies in chapter v. verse 3 of Epistle 1.

The next petition in verse 36 is—

“Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.”

The testimonies have been already explained to be those parts of God’s revealed word which bear witness to the blessedness of serving Him in faithfulness; and the eventual misery of them that disobey Him.

The psalmist intimates that these testimonies every one, who knows the truth, ought to keep before the mind by the help of Divine grace; so seductive is the influence, which the good things of this life have upon the lusts of one’s flesh “which war against the soul,” in drawing one’s heart, which is the soul’s foot, “after its covetousness” or fleshly craving; instead of serving the choice of the inner man—the soul—which “delights in the law of God.” (Rom. vii. 22; Ezek. xxxiii. 31.)

In the 37th verse the psalmist prays—

“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way!”

Here he follows up his former petitions by asking help through grace to withstand the occasions of evil.

The eyes are doors of the soul by which incentives to lust may gain admission, if that be contemplated too long, which is in itself vanity: for this is a word including all that, through gratification of the flesh, would lure the heart away from heavenly things.

The wise man says even "childhood and youth are vanity" (Eccles. xi. 10), by which I understand that the charm wherewith they justly seem in the eyes of older persons to be invested, would, if incontinently dwelt on, lead the believer to regret that those stages of life had irrevocably passed from him, (through the regret at not having spent his own better,) whereas He ought to be looking forward whither God calls him; that is, to the rest with God Himself in the heavenly inheritance for which he has to prepare.

God alone can keep the believer from dwelling too long for his own peace of mind on what justly appear to him scenes on earth of happiness enjoyed by others. He must rather ask God to turn away his eyes from beholding—that is, giving undue heed to happiness; which, though a gift of God, and to be thankfully received by the few that have it, is transient, and in that sense vanity: so that the believer ought not to repine who has it not: for it is as nothing compared with what God hath prepared for all without exception, that love Him and keep His commandments.

In the next petition at verse 38, the psalmist prays: "Stablish Thy word unto Thy servant, who is devoted to Thy fear!"

This petition may clearly be looked upon as intended to follow up the former, and reminds one of that list of the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit mentioned in Isa. xi. 2, which differs only from the one next before it by being intensive.

It being there said that the sixth gift of the Holy Ghost should endow the then expected Saviour of David's line with "the fear of the Lord;" but the seventh should make Him of quick "understanding in that fear."

So here, when the psalmist has prayed for grace to turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, there is room for his asking to be stablished in the fear of the Lord according to His word—the one being what he shall not do, the other what he shall.

In the 39th verse his prayer is: "Turn away my reproach which I fear: for Thy judgments are good."

If Daniel were the writer of this psalm, the fact of his having been made an eunuch by the King of Babylon, would be a reproach to him in the eyes of his worldly countrymen.

For according to Deut. xxiii. 1, mutilated persons might not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

But Daniel might see in Isa. lvi. at verse 3, a promise from God on that head, which nevertheless would not exempt him from reproach in the estimation of such among his countrymen as were not taught of God.

In the 40th verse his closing petition is: "Behold I have longed after Thy precepts; quicken me in Thy righteousness."

This petition, while expressive of the psalmist's own uprightness in the intent of the heart, denotes that he relied not on that

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service for acceptance, but on the righteousness that should be granted by God to him that believeth in His promise; after the manner in which Abraham did this. Gen. xv. 6.

The petitions of this portion have now been gone through, and are evidently all on one subject; to wit, the ordering of the heart aright in the young man's cleansing of his way.

They are, therefore, in accordance with what has been assumed to be the subject of the entire psalm.

Viewed in this light, these petitions are of equal value to any one of us who would from his youth upward, or at any later period of life, begin to walk with God, as did Enoch, and Daniel.

### 5.

Lo ! of Thy statutes teach Thou me the way,  
 Jehovah ! and I'll keep it to the end.  
 Yea, give me understanding, that I may  
 In heart and conscience for Thy law contend.<sup>1</sup>  
 The path whereto my soul I firmly bend—  
 Yea, that of Thy commandments—make me choose.  
 Unto Thy testimonies guide my heart—  
 Its covetousness making it refuse !  
 Bid Thou me call mine eyes back with a start  
 From thought of vanity ; and in Thy way  
 To walk on girt with truth !<sup>2</sup> Thy word impart  
 Unto Thy servant, whom Thy fear doth sway !  
 The censure, that I dread, avert ! for good  
 Thy judgments are. Thy precepts how I've woo'd !  
 And in Thy righteousness would stand, as erst I've  
 stood !

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## SIXTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—VAU.

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### ARGUMENT.

The psalmist is to be regarded at the commencement of this sixth section as standing before God clothed with the graces for which he had in the previous portion made supplication.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 34. Jude v. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 37. Ephes. vi. 14.

His language in the first verse therefore implies that he does not rely on his own use of this grace to earn for him "salvation" in the way of wages. (Rom. iv. 4.) He is of another spirit—he looks for salvation of God's "mercy" in his use of the grace given him. (Rom. xii. 6.)

He joins God's "mercies" and "salvation" as cause and effect are joined: which St. Paul also doth in Rom. xii. 1, whose words will justify this interpretation of the psalmist's language.

For St. Paul there says: "I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice," that (as he says in the next verse) "ye may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God," by which is to be understood "salvation."

Now what St. Paul in that place calls "mercies," are the doctrines unfolded in the preceding chapters: namely, justification by faith alone, and sanctification by the Spirit, for only asking it of God in the name of Jesus.

Assuredly then, the psalmist in his early day by God's "mercies," in verse 41, meant the same doctrines to be understood; with the exception only of the name of Jesus, which in his day had not been revealed.

What he may have most probably meant by the clause "according to Thy word," will be easier to decide after weighing the next verse; where we read

"So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me, for I trust in Thy word."

If the psalmist was Daniel, as we have assumed, it may be readily gathered from the commencement of his book what reproach he might refer to even in early youth.

For if we suppose it to have been cast at him by the princes and courtiers of Nebuchadnezzar, (verse 23) it would probably have arisen out of his resolve on serving at all risk the Lord God of his fathers, rather than eat the meat appointed for him. Dan. i.

These heathen censors might tauntingly ask him, why he should yet expect to be favoured by the God of his nation, Who had wholly cast it off?

Or if the reproach were heaped on him by certain of his countrymen then in captivity with him, as already conjectured at verse 39;

in either case there was a promise in Isa. lvi. 1—5, which might well be reckoned to have been specially referred to by the psalmist under the name of "Thy word," in verse 42. In that place, it is to be observed, the Lord, by Isaiah's pen, speaks of "His salvation" as near, and joins "righteousness" therewith, in a way tantamount to what has been above shewn by the psalmist in verse 41 about "salvation" being of "mercy."

There is in the next place in that "word" by Isaiah's pen, a

special blessing promised to one who would keep the seventh day of the week as a Sabbath; which a captive might well do: and there is a further promise to the heathen that should seek of the Lord "salvation" by the righteousness which is of faith: and to one who had sustained such a mutilation in body, as had Daniel; which, according to Deut. xxiii. 1, would have precluded him entering into the congregation for public worship, had the temple in Jerusalem been then standing.

If the psalmist were Daniel he would surely with this passage in Isaiah have wherewith to answer him that reproached him, whether out of heathen princes<sup>1</sup> or prejudiced fellow-captives.

In the 43rd verse is another petition:

"And take not the word of Thy truth utterly out of my mouth: for I have hoped in Thy judgments."

After which he added:

"So shall I keep Thy law continually, for ever and ever."

The language of the 43rd verse, following on that going before, in which it appears to be assumed that he had wherewith effectually to answer his calumniator, denotes how the psalmist reckoned not on renewal of grace, because of having rightly used that already given him. Assuredly he would not have reckoned himself more worthy thereof, because of *not* having done his best in the use of that grace already given him (Luke xii. 48, and viii. 18); but he meant that he would not make his use of the grace given, to the best of his ability, his ground of confidence in looking for renewal—he would be of the mind which the Lord Jesus Himself inculcated, when in Luke xvii. 10 saying, "when ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you, say we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do." In this lowly spirit, standing as a believer "fully furnished by God's grace unto every good work," (2 Tim. iii. 17) the psalmist was minded to say in verse 43: "And take not the word of Thy truth utterly out of my mouth, for I have hoped in Thy judgments."

Which is as though he had said, "Thou mightest justly, for my chastening, leave me without that freedom in use of it which I now enjoy, but O take it not utterly away, for I have looked unto Thee" to "give me a mouth and wisdom which all my adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." Luke xxi. 14, 15.

"So shall I keep Thy law continually" or undeviatingly—and that, "for ever and ever"—which is another form of words for expressing the salvation spoken of in verse 41.

Here is concluded the former half of this portion; and the latter is devoted to recital of such ways for shewing thankfulness

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 42. In "Zain," at verses 51—53, these two classes of censors are referred to under the names of "the proud" and "the wicked."

to God, for His "mercies" as become one who, like the psalmist, has been "fully furnished unto every good work."

Firstly, in verse 45, he says:—

"And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts," that is, I will contend for the true doctrine of justification by faith only, (Gal. v. 1,) and other doctrines; which are "mercies," seeing that they come from God to His servants, not through the intrinsic worthiness of their service—a supposition that would make "salvation" to be of works, and so gender unto bondage—but of "God's good pleasure." (Matt. xi. 25, Luke ii. 14, xviii. 14.)

Man's soul by reason of union with the flesh of the old Adam has freedom of will to do evil, but it only recovers the will to do good by union through faith, with the spirit of the last Adam, (John viii. 36,) which in the psalmist's time was by renewal alone; but since the proclamation of the Gospel by the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour, through regeneration, which is burial into Christ's sacrificial death, and renewal, which is participation in the Spirit of Christ. (Titus iii. 4—7.)

That man's soul hath only in this way freedom to do good—called in the second collect of our Church's morning service, "perfect freedom"—is plainly set forth by our Saviour in Matt. xi. 28, saying, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;" that is, I will give you in Me, by "the godly motions," proper to My spiritual flesh help, wherewith your soul may mortify "the motions of sins" in your mortal body, (Gal. v. 16, 18,) provided you yield yourselves to "the yoke" of My precepts. So shall your soul receive strength to keep the will of God to the crucifying of the flesh. (Rom. v. 6, Philip. iv. 13.)

This appears to be the psalmist's doctrine also in this 45th verse, because speaking by the same Spirit, 2 Cor. iv. 13, where he saith "For I seek Thy precepts," which is in other words, "I take Thy yoke upon me!"

Then he added in verse 46:—

"I will *spea*k of Thy testimonies even before kings, and will not be ashamed!"

Here we are led by the psalmist to remember that one might "walk at liberty" with *secret* watchfulness in maintaining the freedom gained by the soul to will and do that which is good through yielding of oneself to Christ (Ephes. v. 9); but the servant of God is required by Him to be at proper times open in confession of His Name, even at the risk of life. (Matt. xvi. 24—26.)

Daniel's history shews at what risk he did so. St. Paul also in 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17, shews the like. Also in Rom. i. 16, he explains why he should not be "ashamed" in doing this; whence we may gather what was the psalmist's reason for the same.

It may seem hard to conceive that a true believer would feel shame at what he himself *in secret* knew to be so good; merely because of hearing it spoken against by them that are in authority, or in the majority. But it is not in the power of human nature to withstand the feeling of shame under influential reproach. Wherefore all that can be done under this trial, is to counteract it by devotion of oneself afresh to burial into Christ's sacrificial death, for fellowship with Him. (Philip. ii. 1—4.)

"The offence of the Cross" shall not cease in this age. Gal. v. 11. When St. Paul adds in Rom. i. 16, why he "would not be ashamed of the Gospel;" namely, "because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," he assuredly shews us how the psalmist meant that he would correct the feeling of shame within him, at running counter to public opinion in the king's presence; by reflecting on the intrinsic goodness of these testimonies which brought him "the reproach that he feared," verse 39.

In the 47th verse the psalmist specifies another act of service becoming the man "fully furnished unto every good work;" namely, that he shall himself habitually rejoice in these commandments which he commends to the esteem of others. A fourth act of devotion becoming such a believer is reverence for the Word of God, denoted by lifting of the hands in admiration of it, accompanied by thoughtful appreciation of its purport.

Here are four acts of service towards God highly becoming the psalmist to render.

Firstly. Jealousy for the liberty that is in Christ, yea Christ alone—whereby the soul may will that which is good, and carry it out in defiance of the motions of sins in the flesh—perfect freedom.

Secondly. Open avowal of the truth of God, even before kings, despising the shame. (Heb. xii. 2.)

Thirdly. Care about one's own inward appreciation of it, the while we commend it to others.

Fourthly. Reverence for it, (Heb. iv. 12, 13,) as a word worthy to be used with fear by him, who wields it in controversy, Jer. xxiii. 23, 28, only not superstitiously, but with intelligent reflection.

We seem here to have the rules whereby Daniel in his youth gained strength in the inner man for his admirable behaviour under circumstances exactly answering those here described, whether or not the psalmist were he.

And as no circumstances can be conceived more arduous than those in which he was plunged, we Christians have here a rule for discipline of our souls in God's service, through Christ, which is of the utmost importance to us in walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. (Ephes. iv. 1.)



## 6.

O let Thy mercies also come to me—  
 Yea Thy salvation, after Thine own word,  
 Jehovah! here shall be mine armoury  
 Against the censors whose reproach I've heard.  
 My trust therein I've steadfastly averr'd:  
 Then take not Thy word from me utterly,  
 Who 've in Thy judgments hop'd! So I my vow  
 To keep Thy law unswerving shall embrace  
 For ever! Lo; in liberty I'll walk,  
 For I Thy precepts seek! yea 'fore the face  
 Of kings I'll of Thy testimonies talk,  
 Nor be asham'd! delight too, secretly,  
 In Thy commandments will I multiply;  
 Yea I will Thy commandments venerate  
 With lifted hands; and in Thy statutes meditate.

## SEVENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—ZAIN.

## ARGUMENT.

In this seventh section of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, the writer, as Dr. Thrupp assumes, shews that the believer's course must be one of patient continuance in well-doing under discouragements, with remembrance of God's promises.

Bishop Horne here saith, "God promiseth salvation before He giveth it, to excite our desire for it, to exercise our faith, to prove our sincerity, to perfect our patience. For these purposes, He seems to have sometimes forgotten His word, and to have deserted those whom He had engaged to succour and relieve; in which case He would have us, as it were, to remind Him of His promise, and solicit His performance of it."

On the supposition that Daniel was the author of this psalm, and that he while yet a youth is herein recording his heart's inmost thoughts, it may be assumed, that "the word" to which he more particularly in this 49th verse referred, was that in Jerem. xxix. 10, where we read "Thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place;" namely, Jerusalem. These words having been sent to Babylon by Jeremiah in the reign of Zedekiah, as the 1st

verse of that chapter sets forth, might strictly be described by the psalmist as "The word unto Thy servant upon which Thou hast caused me to hope."

Full and appropriate significance is thus found for the next verse, where the psalmist said,

"This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy word hath quickened me."

Daniel in Babylon, while yet a youth, could truly say, that the Divine promise concerning the deliverance of his nation out of captivity there, after seventy years, had been and was at that time present "his comfort in affliction."

What that affliction was may be seen in the Book of Daniel.

Well might he say that so gracious a message "had quickened him;" that is, kindled within him life and joy toward God, notwithstanding the pressure of outward adversity.

That adversity the psalmist here asserts to proceed from two distinct quarters; as has already been surmised in treating of "the reproach which he dreaded." See verses 22, 39, 42.

One source of affliction was that produced by "the proud," described in verse 51.

The other of "the wicked," in verse 53.

Of the former he saith in verse 51.

"The proud had me greatly in derision; yet have I not declined from Thy law."

The Chaldean princes puffed up with success, called by Habakkuk, chapter i. verse 6, "that bitter and hasty nation," "terrible and dreadful," may well be regarded as they that the psalmist meant by "the proud."

And this is confirmed by observing that their derision would be intended to drive the psalmist from hope in the God of Israel, owing to the success they had gained over that God's chosen people.

But the "proud" were disappointed by the psalmist; for he adds "yet have I not declined from Thy law." Consequently, the aim of these "proud" ones in heaping on him derision was that he should "decline from the law" of his God—a design, which by the book of Daniel we see to have been persistently aimed at by the princes of Babylon in his case.

In the 52nd verse the psalmist states how he disposed of the "derision" of these proud ones: saying,

"I remembered Thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself."

This, be it observed, is a mode of speaking characteristic of one at the time then present continuing under the derision specified.

By "the judgments of old" might be well understood the overthrow of Egypt, when the time had come with God for bringing

up Israel into the land promised to Abram, upon "the iniquity of the Amorites being come to the full." Gen. xv. 16.

Well might the psalmist think how the arm that had inflicted judgments of old on the arrogant Egyptian, would with like ease at the appointed time, bring down to the dust "proud Babylon."

Thus assuredly could Daniel have comforted himself, were he here the speaker.

At the 53rd verse the psalmist adverted to the affliction heaped upon him by the latter class of his adversaries, whom he stigmatises as "the wicked:" saying,

"Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked, that forsake Thy law."

Now it has been already observed by me more than once in discoursing on the psalms, and is fully borne out in this verse, that whereas by the "ungodly" are usually meant those among God's people who were from youth upward living as yet without the knowledge of God; by the "wicked" are meant they that, after awakening unto profession of faith in the God of Israel, backslide.

This definition is here confirmed, for the psalmist in this 53rd verse describes them as "forsaking God's law," which they could not have been said to do, unless they had at one time consciously taken upon them the observance of it.

Mark then in what a different way the psalmist speaks in this 53rd verse of these false brethren—companions in tribulation—who by the force of affliction had renounced the law of the God of their fathers, from what he had of the "proud" heathen.

"Horror," said the psalmist "hath taken hold of me, because of these wicked, that forsake Thy law."

In other words, the psalmist was horrified at thought of what should eventually overtake them.

This state of the psalmist's mind leads us to observe, that in proportion as we learn to dread the thought of provoking God's wrath in our own case, and by this wholesome dread are quickened in cheerfully taking up what reproach for His sake He permits to be laid upon us in the way of our duty, we must shudder at what awaits those whom we see overcome thereby.

Although these "wicked" ones bred the psalmist additional affliction by their malignant aspersions of him, pity for their doom, not wrath at their hatred, was paramount within his breast at thought of them.

That there were such "wicked" Jews among the captives in Babylon is proved by the xxixth of Jeremiah, already referred to in this section.

For by the 15th verse of this chapter we find that certain among the captives persuaded the bulk of their countrymen that

they, as prophets, had warrant from God to repudiate the word that Jeremiah had by God's command sent to Babylon touching the release of the Israelites therefrom after seventy years.

At verse 20 of Jer. xxix. we find him writing,

"Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon.

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophecy a lie unto you in My Name :

"Behold I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes.

"And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon ; saying, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.

"Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbour's wives, and have spoken lying words in My Name, which I have not commanded them. Even I know, and am a Witness, saith the Lord !"

Whether or not this "horror" at the wicked spoken of in this 53rd verse, was that of Daniel, it expresses what unquestionably was Daniel's frame of mind at beholding among the Jewish captives, some, under the pretence of being prophets, calling in question the Divine Message by Jeremiah concerning the termination of the captivity in Babylon by return to Jerusalem at the expiration of seventy years.

The three remaining verses of this section describe the almost seraphic peace vouchsafed to the psalmist amid this opposition from "proud" heathen on the one side and "wicked" fellow-captives on the other, in words which would well express what joy in Christ under like trials were granted to Daniel.

The words of the 54th and two following verses are,

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

"I have remembered Thy Name in the night, and have kept Thy law.

"This I had because I kept Thy precepts."

Thus it appears that the more "proud" princes or "wicked" fellow-captives endeavoured to wean the psalmist from trust in God, the closer would he cleave to God's written word, and take it for his inheritance.

It is a beautiful conception on the psalmist's part, that God Who had made him "a living soul," (Gen. ii. 7,) shutting it up in a body, which was to be the house of his pilgrimage during mortal life, would receive him into His own rest, when the allotted term of conflict on earth should have been passed through. And the psalmist testifies, that because of his thus placing his

happiness in God, notwithstanding outward trials, there was in return granted to him by God the privilege of inward joy.

For it is most true and profitable to remember, that to the servant who uses faithfully the grace wherewith he hath been put in trust, it will be God's pleasure to grant increase of grace, not in the way of debt, but of mercy ; that he may know how good is our God, and that there is no unrighteousness in Him.

7.

That word unto Thy servant, wherein Thou  
Hast caused me to hope, O call to mind !  
Great comfort, 'spite of grief 'neath which I bow,  
In Thy word which hath quicken'd me, I find.  
Nor from Thy law have I in aught declin'd,  
Though proud ones me in great derision hold.  
For I, Jehovah, sweet refreshment draw  
From thinking of Thy judgments wrought of old.  
As to the wicked, which forsake Thy law,  
A horror of their doom upon me came !  
Thy statutes have the meanwhile been my song  
In this house of my pilgrimage. Thy Name  
Hath been by me, Jehovah, all night long  
Remember'd, and Thy law observ'd. This grace  
I gain'd since in my heart Thy precepts held their  
place.

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EIGHTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—CHETH.

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ARGUMENT.

In treating of the preceding section it was shewn that the psalmist apparently described therein the patient continuance in well-doing that would be required by God of one that was "fully furnished unto every good work."

This eighth section may also be regarded as bearing on the same subject ; only that the seventh speaks of such a believer's constancy in withstanding assaults from without ;—this from within his own breast.

To strengthen himself then in withstanding the frailty of his own nature, the psalmist solemnly called God to witness his resolve on contented acceptance of whatsoever God should ap-

point for him in this life, provided only that he might be with Him in the life to come.

Our Saviour commends such a resolve when saying (Matt. vi. 22), "If thine eye be single, thy whole body—or natural manhood—shall be full of light."

This is the significance of the declaration, "Thou art my portion, O Lord, I have said that I would keep Thy words."

Every Jew was required to learn the Song of Moses, and in that song (Deut. xxxii. 9) he found the Lord graciously saying, "The Lord's portion is His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance."

What else then should a devout Jew render unto the Lord for this condescension, but the return of seeking his portion in the Lord? This the psalmist doth; and if we are correct in assuming that this psalm was composed while in captivity in Babylon, his choosing of the Lord for his portion, notwithstanding the loss of home, country, and liberty, would betoken on the psalmist's part such faith in God as Abram was required to exercise when God said to him, in Gen. xv. 1, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward." Or like Paul's, when he testified in Philip. iii. 7, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ;" that is, loss had I retained them, and relinquished Christ.

The next step taken by the psalmist in this endeavour to strengthen himself in God was by prayer, where he said, at verse 58, "I entreated thy favour with my whole heart, be merciful unto me, according to Thy word."

The psalmist in so saying shews that his reverence kept pace with his love; he could ask God, Who searches the heart, to see that he was not double-minded, nor halting between two opinions.

The original term for "word"<sup>1</sup> in this verse is different from that in the verse preceding, and may, as it seems to me, be taken to mean "saying." By this term it would seem to me preferable to understand the traditional teaching in the psalmist's day concerning the voice of Christ in the Scriptures, according to the covenant of promise, handed down from Patriarchal times, which throughout the continuance of the Mosaic covenant was the recognized way opened by God for justification before Him by faith; which was to be thereupon followed by that justified believer's prayer for renewal with the Spirit of Christ. (Ps. xl. 10). Since St. Paul explicitly states in Rom. v. 20 that the law was brought in privily alongside the antecedent covenant of promise—called here God's "saying"—in the same way that Jesus Himself, speaking of the same voice of Christ handed down by tradition, called it, in John viii. 51, "His saying."

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 58. אָמַרָה.

It was according to that primeval covenant of promise, revealed to man from the time of his fall, that man was justified by faith therein, and, on penitently asking for it, sanctified with the Spirit of Christ, whether before the delivery of the law to Moses or under it. And to this day the way of justification is substantially the same. The next step of the man fully furnished unto every good work in strengthening himself against the effects of inward frailty is, in the 59th verse, shewn to be self-examination, conducted in the way laid down by the psalmist, when saying—

“I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.”

Self-examination, to be thorough, must be carried on by application to oneself of the straight rule of God’s commandments. As a carpenter by his plane sees the inequalities of the wood he has in hand; so the believer, by the rule of God’s word, detects the irregularities of his heart and mind.

Some persons’ self-examination consists merely in comparing themselves with others (see 2 Cor. x. 12); but the psalmist “turned his feet unto the Lord’s testimonies.” Here again, however, some find means of starting aside, and falling short of what ought to be the issue of self-examination. For St. James saith, i. 22, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein—he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word—that man shall be blessed in his deed.”

The original word here used by the psalmist, to denote his promptitude in acting on what he learnt that God’s word required of him, is very graphic.

St. Paul said on this point, “immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” (Gal. i. 16.)

The psalmist’s expression is, “I had no what-what-ing,”<sup>1</sup> or as we should say, shilly-shally-ing.

To use St. James’s language already quoted, so soon as he saw where the Lord’s commandment reproved him, he sought God’s blessing in entry on performance of it.

The salutary effect of this promptitude will be made apparent in dwelling on the next verse, where the psalmist saith, “The bands of the wicked have robbed me, but I have not forgotten Thy law.”

It is pointed out by critics that the original word rendered in

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 60. הִתְהַלַּחְתִּי De Burgh says, only in Hith palpel as here, probably from the interrogative הִי what?—to stand questioning.

our authorised version by "robbed me"<sup>1</sup> might more correctly be translated "pressed upon me round about." This statement may, as it seems to me, be compared with that in Ps. xxvii. 2, "when the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell."

In that place by "the wicked" are to be understood spiritual enemies, agents of Satan.

Agreeably herewith, in this 61st verse, too, of the psalm before us, by "the bands of the wicked" I would understand agents of Satan using the psalmist's lusts to draw his soul away from its constancy in communion with God. For St. Peter (1 Epist. ii. 21) speaks of these as "warring against the soul."

Now it seems to me highly probable that by "the bands of the wicked" are to be understood these inbred foes; because the psalmist is treating of matters within his own breast in the verses next before and after this 61st. For the 59th and 60th treat of self-examination, and the 62nd is assuredly better understood of an act of gratitude to God for mastery by grace over an inward enemy; since he saith there, "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments."

Surely this rising up at midnight is rather the act of one grateful for mastery in a struggle with inward foes—vain desires—which he has at length cast out and effectually refused to hold communion with, by calling to mind some judgment of the Lord's mouth which was blessed to him at the moment; so that he "built himself up therewith in his most holy faith." (Jude ver. 20; Gal. xi. 18.)

Unquestionably the man of God, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, is required by God to shew his inward faithfulness by persisting in remembrance of the judgments of God's mouth, until the troublesome thoughts have been cast out.

What the psalmist saith in the next verse may be regarded as a complement to this aversion from solicitations by evil thoughts; his words being "I am a companion of all them that keep Thy precepts:" in this latter verse shewing with whom he would have communion, as in the former with whom he would not.

It may be observed, too, that "precepts" are Divine rules for individual observance; such as that of the Lord Jesus, in Matt. xv. 18, "Out of the heart cometh that which defileth a man." (See Prov. iv. 23, and 2 Cor. vi. 12.)

The subject is closed with the psalmist's saying in verse 64—

"The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy,  
Teach me Thy statutes."

To wit, the laws for collective observance by them that as spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 61. עָרַבְתִּי, rather 'have surrounded;'—Sept. περιεπλάκησαν—generally taken for the Pihel of עָרַבְתִּי.



priests worship Thee in the holy place of the true temple—of which the temple in Jerusalem (at the time now spoken of supposed to have been destroyed) was a pattern—the temple of the universe—referred to in Habak. ii. 19, 20, and by David in Ps. xxvii. 4–6; in which, consequently, the psalmist, though in captivity in Babylon, might worship, as well as any where else on the earth—“for the earth is” in that sense, “full of Thy mercy.”

“For Thou within no walls confin’d,  
Inhabitest the humble mind.  
These ever bring Thee where they come,  
And going take Thee to their home.”

The rules for withstanding inward frailty, which the psalmist here laid down, are equally useful for one in this age of the church, who is “fully furnished unto every good work.” (2 Tim. iii. 17.)

The child of Christian parents has been enrolled in the family of God by baptism, as was the psalmist by circumcision, and at the age of fourteen has had the opportunity of saying at confirmation solemnly and in presence of the elders of the congregation, that he would keep God’s words—as did the psalmist at twelve years of age before the doctors of his nation in the Temple; but if such a believer would patiently continue in well-doing, he needs daily to use, as did the psalmist, prayer, self-examination, and praise for help gotten from God through fidelity in withstanding inbred sin.

8.

Jehovah! Thou my portion art! I’ve said  
That Thy words I would keep! I heartily  
Implor’d Thy favour! mercies on my head  
According to Thy saying multiply!  
Upon my ways I dwelt, and did apply  
My feet unto thy testimonies; yea,  
I dallied not, but Thy commandments chose  
Forthwith! Around me in hostile array  
Press’d bands of wicked ones, but I kept close  
In mind Thy law: and I’ll at midnight rise  
To give Thee thanks for what help, while I lay,  
Thy righteous judgments brought me! Lo, I prize  
The company of them that fear Thee and obey  
Thy precepts! Thou dost earth with mercy fill,  
Thy statutes then, Jehovah, into me instil!

## NINTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—TETH.

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ARGUMENT.

The psalmist having in former sections shewn to what discipline God subjects that man who is thoroughly furnished unto every good work, passes in the section before us to thanksgiving towards God for the tokens of His love therein discernible. All that the psalmist sets forth upon this subject is apparently founded on his testimony in the 68th verse—

“Thou art good, and doest good.”

This doctrine concerning Almighty God is one which, as it seems to me, all creation was intended to exemplify.

The very suffering, which the Second Person in the Divine Unity consented by covenant before the foundation of the world to undergo as the Lamb of God, was because of its being needful to shew that even where God might lay upon His creatures evil in the sense of affliction to the extent of a requirement to render back life to Him at His call for it, that Second Divine Person should furnish the example of cheerful obedience unto God in this respect; as though saying in the words of this 68th verse—

“Thou art good, and doest good!”

The fact of the sinless Saviour being required by His Father to bear affliction to the extent of ignominious and painful death (as the slaying of the lamb at the feast of the Passover foreshewed) proves that it is consistent with the goodness of God to lay affliction on one to any amount.

The doctrine that “God is good, and doeth good,” requires us to glorify God under such affliction, with the worthy persuasion that God has a good purpose connected with His own glory in so afflicting His creature; and that, if the discipline be worthily borne, God in His goodness will not allow that creature to be eventually a loser; nay, will provide that he shall be gainer of an ample recompence.

For, as it is written in Ezek. xxix. 18, how God said of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, that for the service done by him against Tyre without wages he should be reimbursed by a commission against Egypt, which would be remunerative, we may look upon God as here laying down universally, that He takes no one's service without wages; which is a sort of corollary to the doctrine we are now considering: namely, of His being good, and doing good.

But to bear evil in the sense of affliction, as did the Lamb of God, solely for the glory of God, without sin on His own part,

as the procuring cause, is the very highest sort of service, and therefore in accordance with the goodness of God is to be rewarded in the highest manner.

This, as St. Paul testifies in Philip. ii. 9, God hath done, seeing that God hath highly exalted His Son—the holy One and the just—by raising up Him that as man died in His service, to be in the spiritual manhood His fellow on the throne of glory!

We of this advanced stage in the Church's progress to the consummation of all things, have in the record of Christ crucified an exemplification of the doctrine, that "God is good, and doeth good," which the psalmist had not.

To the psalmist was only made known by the testimonies extant in his day (as in Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii.) that the Christ should be as a Lamb slain in sacrifice: yet he believed, that when God could consistently with His goodness afflict His Christ, much more could He one, like the psalmist's own self, that had sinned, and thereby procured to himself affliction. (Jer. ii. 17.)

In a similar strain too Jeremiah asked in Lam. iii. 39, "Wherefore doth a living man complain—a man for the punishment of his sins?"

In this frame of mind the psalmist spake in this portion of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, whom we believe to have been the contemporary of Jeremiah, and to have been suffering in Babylon the same national chastisement that Jeremiah was undergoing in Egypt.

Under all the trials thus pressing upon the psalmist, owing to "the proud" on the one hand, or "the wicked" on the other, he could, inasmuch as he abode under it with God, solemnly say—

"Thou hast dealt with Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word."

That is, Thou hast to his clear conviction inflicted less on him than his iniquities deserved, and hast made him an incalculable gainer in the inner man, for all that Thou hast laid upon him in the outer.

This outpouring of a thankful heart, which like the scented herb when bruised, sheddeth forth fragrance, is followed by the petition in verse 66—

"Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed Thy commandments."

Here it seems to me that the psalmist virtually prays for continuance of the chastening, if it pleases God only in that way to give him enlightenment concerning "good judgment<sup>1</sup> and knowledge," or experimental communion with God.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 66. מִשְׁפָּט upon the signification of this word, see the remarks on its use in Ps. xxxiv. 9.

This petition, so explained, is akin to that in Ps. ix. 9, 10, where David said—

“The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed—a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee; for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.”

So explained, the connection between the 66th and 67th verses is obvious, where the psalmist added—

“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word.”

After this follows his testimony already explained:

“Thou art good, and doest good!  
Teach me Thy statutes.”

The psalmist here records his persuasion, that if he could have been left in ease and comfort, consistently with his soul's health, God, Who delighteth in the prosperity of His servants, and doth not willingly afflict them, would have granted him an untroubled life in the mortal body.

But the psalmist confessed prosperity to have made him, like a spoilt child, averse from conformity in all respects with what he knew to be the word of God concerning him.

Nevertheless he testifies in verse 69 that he is not in the least disposed to fret about what “the proud” delight in telling him is the reason of his afflictions.

His conscience acquits him of having provoked punishment by his own misconduct in the way they would insinuate.

Though aware that God was chastening him for his sins, yet it was not for such sins as “the proud” would charge on him.

Howbeit, in dealing with them, he would not recriminate, by shewing them to be guilty of that which they charged on him.

He would rather be patient, and commit his cause to Him Who judgeth righteously; and in this way keep the precepts of the Lord touching one in his condition “with his whole heart.”

In the next verse he shews how well aware he was that the prosperity which had operated injuriously on himself, accounted for their arrogance. For their heart was as “gross as grease.” The very thought of this made him afresh render God honour for His discipline: so that he, by implication, said,—Rather than be so gross, as I might have been if left at ease, I hail the affliction that has led to my gaining from Thee, by grace, the faculty of delighting in Thy law. Hence of a truth “it is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes.”

“The law of Thy mouth<sup>2</sup> is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.”

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 72. The force of this expression is to be seen in Isa. i. 20 and lviii.

14. To notice this is of importance in a psalm wherein the distinctive names for God's revealed will are carefully commemorated.

Hard as it may seem to us, while in ease, to believe that any one can so thank God for affliction, it may any day be proved by visiting those who have been a long time sick and afflicted.

They may be heard testifying with fervour that they had received from God in their affliction what they would not part with for all that might be offered to them; to wit, "Good judgment and knowledge." So that they say with far more emphasis than equally pious persons can in prosperity, "Thou, Lord, art good, and doest good!"

## 9

Well hast Thou, O Jehovah, with me dealt  
According to Thy word! To me impart  
Knowledge and good discernment, for I've felt  
The truth of Thy commandments! Ere my smart,  
I stray'd; but now Thy saying<sup>a</sup> have at heart.  
Good art Thou, and good do'st! cause me to learn  
Thy statutes! Proud assailants have a lie  
Against me forg'd. I my whole heart do turn  
Unto Thy statutes—theirs' in apathy  
Is gross as grease! meanwhile I in Thy law  
Find my delight! Good has it been for me  
That I have known affliction, which did draw  
My heed unto Thy statutes: verily  
The law of Thy mouth good for me I hold  
Past untold thousands far of silver or of gold.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 67. אִמְרָתְךָ I prefer, with Dr. Thrupp, to distinguish this word by the meaning of "saying," meaning thereby an utterance of the Lord's mouth—as in the preceding note, and in the comment on this word at verse 41, part 6; see also the 123rd verse.

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TENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—Yod.

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ARGUMENT.

Hitherto it has been, as I trust, successfully shewn that the eight precepts in one section are linked together by a thread of thought bearing on one point more particularly therein enforced: at the same time that the point so dwelt on is in keeping with the general subject of the entire psalm.

In the endeavour, then, to trace the same system of structure through this section, let it be observed that in the 79th verse

is to be seen the leading wish of the psalmist in this section; and that what he says in the other verses subserves his attainment of this wish.

The 79th verse is, "Let those, that fear Thee, be turned unto me; and those that have known Thy testimonies."

From this petition it is to be gathered that, at the time of the psalmist penning this line, those in his vicinity that feared God were from some cause or other turned away from him, so that he was deserted and lonely; else he would not have prayed that they might be "turned unto him."

He appears, then, to deprecate this condition as one of danger to his soul.

For he might remember how the wise man had said, "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up." (Eccles. iv. 10.)

He might also remember how God had said of man, even in his state of innocence, "It is not good for man to be alone."

The psalmist therefore appears to me to be, throughout this section, seeking relief (as one thoroughly furnished unto every good work) from the perilous and exposed condition of loneliness, if it should please God after his subjugation thus far under it, to relieve him therefrom. It is to be observed that God's afflictive dealings with His children very often have this effect, and that it is uniformly deplored by the sufferer.

This may be seen in Ps. xxxi. 11—14, where we read: "I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without, fled from me."

Also the innocent Saviour was appointed to lament in like manner in Ps. lxxxviii. 18: "Lover and friend hast Thou put away from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

It appears to me, then, that the psalmist shews in this section how he sought of God relief from this lonely condition, which left him without the help of friendly interchange of thought with a kindred mind: and that, in what he thus did for himself, he has left a model for them to follow, who should be similarly isolated in the service of God.

Firstly, he saith at verse 73:—

"Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me: Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments."

Here he prefaces his intended petition for relief by profession of that dependence on God as his Creator, which a child has on his parent for all his need.

As a child is persuaded that his parents, because of that relationship, will give him, for only asking, what they know to be needful for his relief; so thinks the psalmist here of God.

Because God hath made him, He will carry on the good work which He hath begun, if His working be only waited for by His creature.

Before all things, saith the psalmist, give me understanding, or perception of the weight and authority wherewith Thy commandments are issued ; which will overrule within me, all that makes it hard to say, "Thy will be done."

This petition therefore is, as it seems to me, framed in the precautionary strain used by Jeremiah in xii. 1, where he saith, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee : yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments."

The spirit of self-surrender unto God, in which this petition is framed, entirely accords with Jeremiah's protestation (ch. x. 23), "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

The Lord Jesus also subsequently made the same implicit dependence on God indispensable for a believer's admission into His Kingdom ; where He said, as recorded by Matth. xviii. 3, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

As the child looks to his parents to supply all his need, so must the believer look to God ; persuaded that God does what is best for him, whether his prayer be granted or denied. (1 John v. 14.)

After this preliminary profession of dependence on God to carry on the work He hath begun (Philip. i. 6), like as in the Litany we are taught to pray Christ to do because of His having done so much already—where we say "By Thine agony and bloody sweat" and Thy other like sufferings for us, grant us now deliverance—the psalmist's next step in seeking relief from his lonely condition, is to plead before God, how glory would redound to God from the hearts of them that fear Him (to their great profit), could they but see him and observe how, under all his trial, he hoped in God's word. This very impression implies that, at the time then present, they could not see the psalmist, owing apparently to their having withdrawn themselves from him, though in his neighbourhood.

"If," saith the psalmist, "they could by Thy grace be moved to fraternise with me afresh, and should see how I have been supported under the affliction bowing me down, from which they shrank, because of my hoping in Thy word, how would they rejoice before Thee !"

Here the psalmist appears to make the glory that is to redound to God by the bestowal on him of his desire, his first consideration in urging it ; just as in 2 Cor. ix. 12 St. Paul made "the thanksgivings from many" that should redound to the glory of God—a fruit of the Corinthian liberality, in one respect, more to be rejoiced over than their liberality itself, (regarded as a fruit of the Spirit), because of its propagation of itself in the hearts of others.

This is the sense in which I take the psalmist to say in verse 74 :

"They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in Thy word!"

The psalmist's next step in pursuit of his desire denotes, as it seems to me, a rising apprehension lest it should merge within him into an arraignment of God's having so dealt with him as to "put lover and acquaintance temporarily far from him:" it being, however, permitted him to hope that the loneliness to which he was reduced had by the time then present answered God's own purpose in bringing him under it.

Such I take to be the meaning of His petition in verse 75:—

"I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

He then proceeds in verse 76 to ask for "the comfort" that such a restoration to Communion with kindred minds would give him; saying in verse 76:—

"Let, I pray Thee, Thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Thy word unto Thy servant."

Adding in the next verse, in enhancement of the preceding petition, that it would be "life" to him—using the word in the sense given it by the Saviour in John iv. 51, where he meant that the nobleman's son did not barely exist, but enjoy life—or as St. Paul used the like expression when asking in Rom. xi. 15, "What shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"

Such I take to be the force of the petition in verse 77, following up that for "comfort" in the verse preceding; and both alike bearing on the petition at length, explicitly supplicating in verse 79 that the Lord would incline those that were fearing Him in that place to "turn" unto the psalmist. In this strain the psalmist seems to me to say:—

"Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live; for Thy law is my delight."

The three verses that remain appear to me to be linked together by that reference to "shame" expressed in the first and third, and, as it seems to me, delicately implied in the second.

In the 78th I understand the psalmist to crave that "the proud" princes (verse 23) might be put to shame (through some reproof of them in God's good providence by their own sovereign), so that room might be afforded those that were in the psalmist's neighbourhood, fearing God, to pluck up courage and seek an interview with him.

The psalmist seems to me, in saying at verse 78 on this head—

"Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause; but I will meditate in Thy precepts"—

to plead, that he asks not for shame to be heaped upon these proud ones out of a vindictive spirit, but for his needful comfort and refreshment in soul; since he would remember God's "precepts"—such as that in Prov. xxv. 21, 22.



When the psalmist saith in verse 79—

“Let those that fear Thee be turned unto me, and those that have known Thy testimonies”—

the supposition here hazarded by me, that they had been led by shame to withdraw from the psalmist, and that it would be for their soul's good to be recovered from that state, while their communion would be a solace to himself which he dearly needed—has ample warrant for it in St. Paul's explicit record of his experience under very similar circumstances to those of Daniel in Babylon—whom we have supposed the psalmist to be. For in 2 Tim. iv. 16 he recorded—

“At my first answer (on arraignment before the Roman Emperor) no man stood with me; but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.”

Also in chap. 1 of the same Epistle, at verse 8, he had said: “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.”

And again at verse 15: “All they which were in Asia be turned away from me.”

What St. Paul here saith happened to him, fully bears out what it seems to me the psalmist deprecated; and ample warrant, as it seems to me, is here found for my supposition, that they which feared God in the psalmist's vicinity were “turned away” from him through shame. Yea, those “that had known God's testimonies” had shrank from fellowship in suffering with the psalmist who was valiant for them. The portion is then concluded with the petition—

“Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes, that *I* be not ashamed”—

as though he would watch against any tendency within him to lean by preference upon man rather than God. For he might remember how Jeremiah had said, “Cursed be the man, that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and departeth from the living God” (xvii. 5); he, therefore, pleads his lively conviction that in no other way can his heart be sound in God's statutes than by primarily relying on God for solace, and on human sympathy secondarily, according to God's permission.

For, in regard to this matter of soundness in the heart, the Lord Jesus has these remarkable words in John v. 44: “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God only?”

The psalmist doubtless remembered how it had been written, “The fear of man bringeth a snare” (Prov. xxix. 25); an evidence of which is furnished us by no less a person than Peter, when Paul withstood him to the face in Gal. ii. 11.

We are therefore to understand that the psalmist, in asking

for renewed intercourse with those in his neighbourhood that feared God, pleaded here that in so doing he nevertheless looked to God to save him from being hampered by their prejudices, in testifying to what God had shewn him to be the truth of His testimonies.

In that testimony (which had indeed brought upon him his affliction) he would abide with God at all cost.

Just as the beloved disciple subsequently said in 1 John ii. 28, "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear we may have confidence; and not be ashamed before Him, at His coming."

This portion has now been gone through; and I trust it has been shewn, as I proposed, that its verses bear on one subject; which is further in keeping with that of the entire psalm.

Assuredly this section, so understood, proves that the children of God were under earlier and less enlightened dispensations than ours required, for maintenance in life toward God, to keep watch over their hearts—as the wise man counsels in Prov. iv. 23. How much more then ought we to do this, if fully furnished unto every good work, when our Lord saith in Matt. xv. 18, "Out of the heart cometh that which defileth a man;" and in John xiii. 8, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me;" and St. Paul saith in 2 Cor. vii. 1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (See, too, Heb. ix. 14, and Rev. ii. 23.) This portion, therefore, is a valuable guide to one of us who, for like cause, is left alone and desolate.

## 10.

Thy hands have made and fashion'd me, O then  
Give Thou me understanding, so shall I  
Learn Thy Commandments! They that fear Thee,  
when

They see me, will be glad that I rely  
Upon Thy word. Well do I know that Thy  
Judgments are right, Jehovah, and that Thou  
In faithfulness dost chide me! let, I pray,  
Thy gracious kindness bring me comfort now  
According to Thy saying. Grant, I may  
Through mercy live, who in Thy law rejoice!  
O bring the proud to shame, that causelessly  
Molest me—of Thy precepts making choice.  
Let them that fear Thee, and them, turn to me,  
That know Thy testimonies! but lest shame  
O'ertake me, let me my heart by Thy statutes frame!

ELEVENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—CAPH.

ARGUMENT.

Having already gathered from divers expressions in this psalm that its author was in captivity in Babylon, and that he probably was Daniel, it now seems to me further to be gathered from some expressions in this and the following portion, that Daniel composed this psalm towards the close of his life, after he had been delivered out of the den of lions. (Dan. vi.)

At this stage in his eventful life, as we learn by verse one of Dan. ix., he had already been enlightened with the vision of the seventy sevens (of years), which after the expiration of the seventy years then (ix. 2) running out, would leave his fellow-captives at liberty to return to their own land to rebuild their city and temple.

In that vision of the seventy sevens (of years), Daniel was darkly taught that Messiah should be cut off (verse 26) in the 483rd year from the expiration of the 70 then running out: whereupon should intervene an indefinite period, during which Daniel's people should endure the Divine wrath provoked by the rejection of Messiah.

The expression in this section which suggests to me these conjectures is that in verse 87, where occurs the word לְעֵלְמָהּ in connection with the psalmist's being "all but," or "for a small moment put an end to upon earth."

This word is found in Isa. xxvi. 20, in connection with a persecution of the psalmist's people, under which God should require them to resign themselves "for a small moment" to death itself, "until the indignation be overpast," which should precede Messiah's coming to bless His Israel in their own land, with the predicted ascendancy over all kingdoms, according to Dan. vii. 27.

It seems to me then, that Daniel having received the vision of the seventy sevens (of years), and afterward undergone an actual self-surrender unto death in reliance on God; on being delivered, regarded himself as therein made a type of Messiah's own surrender unto death in dependence on God to bring Him out therefrom; according to the predictions in Ps. lvii., lxxxviii., and xci., as also in Isa. liii: and further, as a type of that latter generation of his nation (referred to in Isa. xxvi. 20), who should yield themselves to death prior to their final redemption by Messiah from captivity in the fullest sense, wherein the psalmist's nation was taught by God to look for it; to whom was promised an inheritance in the earth. See Zechariah's language on this

point in Luke i. 68—75. It hence seems to me, that this psalm was written with the design of furnishing instruction under affliction appointed by God to the Messiah Himself in the days of His flesh, and also to His faithful followers, one in spirit with Him: (2 Pet. i. 4, and John viii. 34—36, and Heb. ii. 1—6.) even to the time of that latest and severest tribulation appointed to overtake the psalmist's own people (Jer. xxx. 5—9); whereof the psalmist (as we think) reckoned his own condemnation to the den of lions, and rescue therefrom, to be a type.

With this view, as it seems to me, the psalmist prolonged his description of the affliction from youth upward of one thoroughly furnished unto every good work, (which remarkably tallied with his own experience in Babylon,) until he had reached the closing section of the former half of the psalm; after which (as will be seen when contemplating the next section), he brake out into fervent anticipation of deliverance in the day appointed by the Lord.

The psalmist's subjection to afflictive discipline may be justly reckoned a pattern of God's ordinary dealing with those He loves. The afflictions with which He visits His faithful people are continued until they have a fear within them of their soul's fainting and failing under the protracted and exhausting trial.

Yet God had said by Isaiah lvii. 16, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; lest the spirit should fail before Me and the souls that I have made."

That "faintness of the soul" which the psalmist speaks of in verse 81, is often referred to by the children of God in the Old Testament.

In the thirteenth chapter of the Proverbs, and 12th verse, the wise king treats of it in general terms, when saying, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Also in the third chapter, at verse 11, he had written, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction; for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Nevertheless, it is very hard for the human soul to bear such long protracted tribulation.

But this burden is required to be borne, that the support needed under it may be sought of God.

That afflictive discipline is for this purpose so protracted, is to be gathered from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself, in answer to St. Paul's earnest petition recorded in 2 Cor. xii. 7, that "the thorn in the flesh sent to buffet him, might be taken away." The answer received hereto was, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness;" that is to say, the weaker a believer feels himself to be, the more sensible he is of his need to wait on God in Christ for sustainment under the trial.

Let him then, according to the exhortation of our blessed

Saviour in Luke xviii. 1, "always be ready to pray and not to faint." Thus will he, like the psalmist in this section, give glory to God by the worthy persuasion (to use the psalmist's language in an earlier portion of this psalm), "that God is good and doeth good;" and likewise that He knoweth, better than we do, what is needful for us. "And will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation make the way to escape that we may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

There are some virtues, such as that of patience, which are only to be learnt under affliction; yet patience appears, from St. James' testimony, to be the perfectness of the spiritual growth of man.

The Apostle's words are, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience.

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire," or fully matured, "lacking nothing" of the measure of stature to which you are called.

It hence is plain why "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," (2 Tim. iii. 12); and why "that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts xiv. 22.)

For, like as an infant would not be a fully formed one, unless he had all the limbs of the human body in proportion, though in miniature; so a child of God would not be fully like to Christ, unless there was wrought in him some counterpart, though in miniature, to each of the graces in Christ—his Covenant-Head—"grace for grace," or answering to a correspondent grace in Him. (John i. 16.)

For attainment unto this perfection, or thorough equipment unto every good work, the psalmist in this eleventh section protests his steadfast purpose of abiding with God under the trial, (Luke xxii. 28) saying—

"I hope in Thy word!"

"When wilt Thou comfort me?"

"I do not forget Thy statutes!"

"When wilt Thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?"

"The pits digged for me are not after Thy law!"

"They persecute me wrongfully, help Thou me!"

"I forsook not Thy precepts."

"Quicken me! and I shall keep the testimonies of Thy mouth."

The great length to which we in our day see the affliction of bed-ridden invalids protracted, and others for whom there is no human hope of recovery, exemplifies before our eyes what the psalmist shews to have been his experience.

Consequently the verses of this section are eminently suited for meditation, not only by those persons who are being so tried

with affliction, but by those whose duty it is to attend upon them, whether for the body or the soul.

The remark has been heard by me, that ordinarily every person in attendance is tired out before it pleases God that the sufferer shall be released from further endurance of weary days and nights, by translation to His own heavenly rest.

Without doubt, one purpose of God in so protracting the trials of sufferers, either as was the case with the psalmist by captivity, or as it is among us by sickness or loss of reason, is to afford us occasions for training in the grace of patience, by "bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ." (Gal. vi. 2.) Those who attend the sick or infirm ones as nurse or sympathising companion are doubtless fulfilling, or afforded the opportunity of fulfilling, a service in the mystical body of Christ, very highly to be esteemed, when judged of in the light of God's word; although not often recognised as worthy of special estimation by the outer world. It was no little aggravation of the psalmist's protracted affliction, that in his captivity, he was cut off from the solace of sympathising attendants.

Let then those among us who feel, as we readily conceive they may, their months, nay years of sickness or infirmity hard to bear, find occasion for thankfulness in thinking how much better God appoints that they should be situate in their affliction, seeing that He leaves some to wait upon them therein with soothing counsel and treatment, than was the psalmist in his captivity, or the blessed Lord in His agony.

Also let any of us who are called for a comparatively short time to attendance on the afflicted, check the disposition to be weary, by considering how manifestly it is God's appointment that the sufferer should be held for a protracted space of time in that state of dependence on the sympathy of others.

Like as the psalmist said, "I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." (Ps. xxxix. 9.) May we seek grace to say so too! This submission of one's self under God's mighty hand, appears to be imperatively required by God in all His saints, (1 Pet. v. 6); so that the psalmist, if, as we suppose, describing in this psalm the spiritual trials to which God subjects those whom He hath fully furnished unto every good work, could not with propriety have omitted this view of God's chastening, at the turning point in his account, (at this eleventh section) of the life, walk, and triumph of faith.

# 11.

My soul is faint with the intense desire  
For Thy salvation—my hope's in Thy word—  
Mine eyes fail for Thy promise! I enquire

When wilt Thou comfort me ? my skin is blurr'd  
 Like bottle in the smoke, while I've preferr'd  
 Thy statutes. O bethink Thee how brief are  
 Thy servant's days, and judgment execute  
 On them that hate me ! proud ones pits prepare  
 In mock'ry of Thy law ! they persecute  
 Me wrongfully, then do Thou grant relief !  
 All Thy commandments faithful are ! a brief  
 Moment on earth they me o'ermastered, who  
 Remained unto Thy precepts always true.  
 Now of Thy loving-kindness energise  
 Me ! so the testimony of Thy mouth I'll prize !

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TWELFTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—LAMED.

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ARGUMENT.

As the eight verses in each preceding section have been shewn to mainly refer to one point, which like a thread running through the whole, connects them together, giving unity to a section ; such I hope to shew is the case in this twelfth one.

And further, that this leading subject, to which the eight verses are here assumed to refer, is in this case, as in the preceding, agreeable to the general subject of the psalm.

Firstly, then, in regard to the subject mainly treated in this twelfth section, the word in the original Hebrew here translated "for ever" may also be rendered "concerning time hidden ;" that is, the age in which hath been promised to Abraham a generation among his natural descendants which shall be fitted to receive the paradisiacal happiness promised to Israel in the Lord's land.

The position in which לעולם here stands, inclines me to think it was intended in this place to bear that latter signification. For it is the central word in the entire psalm—being the first of the twelfth section—there being twenty-two in all.

Now in the thirty-seventh psalm which, like this hundred and nineteenth is acrostic, there occurs at the 16th letter א a mystical use of this word לעולם in the heart of the verse ; where it is written, "The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not His saints ; they are preserved for ever" or for time hidden—to wit, "the hidden age"—emphasized with the Article in Ps. xxviii. 9 in the word העולם

Supposing then this word to have been employed in a mystical sense in verse 89 of this hundred and nineteenth psalm, its meaning will be "Thy word, O Lord, concerning time hidden—the hidden age—is settled in heaven:" in other words, it is decreed in "the counsel of peace that is between them both"—to wit, The Father and the Son. (Zech. vi. 13.) Record of such decree seems to me to be borne witness to in Ps. lxxxix. 1—3 and 29—37, and in lxxviii. 4 and 6, where mention is made of "that latter generation" in which God will fulfill the promises made to Abraham from Gen. xii. 7 to xxii. 18.

In the next verse—the 90th—it is implied that, though the time for giving this latter generation to Abraham be long delayed, God's faithfulness is pledged that He will eventually send it, preparatory to the return of the Messiah to His ancient people (as we now see) "a second time." (Acts vii. 13, compared with Gen. xlv. 4—16 and Dan. ix. 26—27.) The very earth is sustained in its course for fulfilment of this promise to Abraham.

If this explanation of verse 90 be admitted, its agreement in subject with what was assumed to be that of the 89th will be apparent.

The 91st verse, too, seems to me to admit of an explanation in harmony herewith. The words of this verse as they stand in the Hebrew have manifestly fallen into confusion.

For, as they now stand, it is not clear what is the antecedent of "they;" and "this day" is not the strictly correct translation of לַיהוָה but "the day"—meaning, as it seems to me, "the day of the Lord"—which is that of the Lord's return to bless Israel, referred to, as I conceive, in the two verses preceding. (See Isa. ii. 12.)

If then it might be permitted me to attempt a restoration of order in the first three words of the 91st verse, they would stand thus—

לַיהוָה or לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ עֲמֹדִי

meaning "Thine ordinances," to wit, concerning the sun and moon, "continue for the day," to wit, the great day, "for all are Thy servants."

Now in other parts of Scripture, treating of this millennial glory promised to Israel, it is usual to meet with this reference to the stability of the Divine ordinances concerning the heavens and the earth as pledge, that no matter how many generations in Israel may intervene before the coming of that "latter one," come it shall. (See Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37; also Ps. lxxii. 17.)

Also in Jer. xxxi. which expressly treats of the blessedness on earth in reserve for a chosen generation in Israel (which was known to Daniel in Babylon; as may be seen by Jer. xxix. 1, and Dan. ix. 4) there occurs at verse 35 words which might well be thought to have been in the psalmist's mind when penning the verses of this twelfth section. The words are—



"Thus saith the Lord Which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar—the Lord of hosts is His Name.—If those ordinances depart from before Me, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever."

Thus there seems to me one leading idea or topic referred to in the first three verses of this twelfth section.

And now, before proceeding further with my exposition of reference hereto in the remaining ones, let me pass to the other point which I undertook at the outset to establish; namely, that for the psalmist to break out thus abruptly in the centre of this psalm, with reference to the return of the Lord to bless Israel, was in keeping with the general tenour of the psalm.

In treating of the preceding section we saw that the psalmist had continued to describe himself as suffering the trial imposed on him. What then could have been more appropriate, than that the psalmist, when not himself permitted to obtain relief from affliction in answer to his prayers, should rejoice in what God would eventually do for his nation? Thus the subject of Israel's paradisiacal glory (whereof Ezek. xx. 12 testifies that the Sabbaths given Israel in the wilderness were pledge) is in accordance with that of the psalm as a whole.

It was the obvious duty of the psalmist, in the absence of any special answer to his prayers for abatement of his personal trials, to seek consolation in commemoration of God's promises of final favour on earth to his nation.

In the ninetieth psalm, from verse 12 to the end, he might have seen that Moses did this. Jeremiah also—his contemporary—might have been seen in chapter xxxi. 26 to have done so.

It seems to me then that in the four verses next following the 91st, the psalmist testifies, that he found solace in thinking of God's promise to Israel, because of having in his own experience proved the quickening virtue vouchsafed by God to himself in meditation on His law—His precepts—and His testimonies.

After which he closes this section with saying at verse 96—

"I have seen an end of all perfection: but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

These words admit of various modifications in their sense, according as they are thought to have been applied by the psalmist.

It being then my endeavour to trace an unity of thought throughout these eight verses, I suppose the psalmist to have applied this 96th verse to the subject of the Lord's final favour to Israel.

By "perfection" I take to be here meant "thorough equipment unto every good work," according to 2 Tim. iii. 17.

And by the psalmist saying "that he had seen an end of all of it," I take him to have meant, that he noticed how God had afforded one generation after another in Israel the opportunity of preparing the way for the coming of their Messiah to bless them, after the manner referred to in Isa. v. 1—7, where is to be seen, how the Lord charged on Israel for a fault, that when He had thoroughly furnished them on going forth from Egypt against Canaan, with the means of preparing the way for the millennial reign of the Lord among them, the nation had disappointed Him.

By Jeremiah also, in chap. ii. 1—8, the Lord shewed the same ground of complaint. But the psalmist might truly say that "he had seen an end of all perfection," if we suppose him to have been Daniel, and that he wrote this psalm towards the end of his life—at the time referred to in Dan. v. 11, 12.

He may, in that case, have referred here to the vision mentioned in chapter ix, in which at verse 24 Daniel speaks of a vision concerning the "end" of "perfection" or fitness in Israel for the faithful ones—such as David and Solomon—or again Hezekiah followed by Manasseh—or Josiah by his backsliding sons and brother—to serve God and prepare for the Lord's coming to reign over them; as in Isa. xl. 1—11 they were exhorted to do.

On that supposition the words which follow, "But Thy commandment is exceeding broad," might mean "but it by no means remains for me to conclude from 'the end' so foreshewn me, that the coming of the Lord to finally bring to Israel the ascendancy over all the kingdoms of the world (Dan. vii. 27) will come into operation immediately on expiration of these seventy years appointed for the duration of this present captivity; since," saith the psalmist, "Thy commandment," to wit—that, according to my theory in verse 89—"is exceeding broad"—in other words, is so framed as to afford ample "room" רחב (with which compare Gen. xvi. 22) for God's making trial of men whom He should again thoroughly furnish unto every good work, whether they would "prepare the way of the Lord" under other conditions of service; to prove the more amply how needful it was for God to have antecedently by decree before the foundation of the world made the bringing in of everlasting righteousness to solely depend on the covenant between the Father and the Son: and so too the coming of that generation which should prepare the way of the Lord. (See Isa. lxiii. 7, 8.)

Since if the bringing in of "the restitution of all things to Israel" had in the least wise been made dependent or contingent on due discharge of duty in preparing the way of the Lord by those whom He should in any age thoroughly furnish unto every good work, the return of the Lord to bring in the millennial happiness of Israel on earth would have been indefinitely put

off; for by their misuse of the grace given them they would rather provoke God to appoint unto them a longer or shorter space of time during which they should nationally suffer punishment: as we of this latter age see to have been the case with that generation of Israel in our Lord's day which rejected the gospel when preached to them first by the Apostles after His resurrection; and now see to be hanging over our heads, who are of the succession descending from the Apostles, because of the signs being rife amongst us of "the love of many waxing cold" through the prevalence of iniquity, and of "the preaching of the gospel for a witness among all nations" (without effectual conversion of them), according to the Lord's forewarning in Matt. xxiv. 12—14.

If the psalmist were Daniel, what he said in vision, chapter ix. 25—27 (how that in the midst of the 483rd year, after the expiration of the 70 years then running out, Messiah should be cut off amongst his own people) would suffice to prompt the words "Thy commandment is exceeding broad;" for he might see that his people would then subject themselves to a season of divorcement the length of which could not be judged of—but which we now see was to be measured by that decline from the duty of preparing the way of the Lord for which the labourers called to the vineyard upon the ejection of the psalmist's own nation, in that capacity (Matt. xxi. 43) therefrom, should have similarly provoked God to cast them out also (Luke xxi. 24); whereupon He would of His undeserved mercy—not Israel's worthiness—return with favour to His ancient people and grant them unasked "that latter generation which would not lie"—that is, disappoint Him—in this matter of preparing the way of the Lord. (Isa. lxiii. 8.)

Thus may we see to be confirmed in our age the correctness of the psalmist's testimony—as to his having "seen" in his day "an end to all perfection," or worthiness on man's part to procure for Israel the fulfilment of their predicted ascendancy over all nations in the day of the triumphant Messiah. (Deut. vi. 25.)

And throughout the Epistles of St. Paul this hope of the coming of the Lord is held forth to us for our solace, even though it should please God to leave us in His service to die a painful and ignominious death; after the same manner in which the psalmist here used it. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

## 12.

For that age hidden doth Thy word stand fast  
In heav'n, Jehovah! and Thy faithfulness  
To generation upon generation last.

What course Thou didst upon this earth impress  
 It keepeth. To that day in changelessness  
 Thine ordinances stand—they serve Thee all !  
 Had not Thy law been my delight, my soul  
 Had perish'd in my anguish, hence I'll call  
 Thy precepts to remembrance and extol  
 The grace wherewith in them Thou'st quicken'd me!  
 Thine am I; O! preserve me, for I've sought  
 Thy precepts! some my murderers would be,  
 But to Thy testimonies I my thought  
 Apply! of all perfection I an end  
 Have seen, but widely Thy commandment doth extend!

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THIRTEENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—MEM.

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ARGUMENT.

The subject which connects together the eight verses of this thirteenth section is clearly the right use of God's revealed word. Seven departments of it are here specified—law, commandments, testimonies, precepts, word (written), judgments, saying or word uttered, the distinct meaning of each of which has been already given.

This subject of the right use of God's revealed word comes in the course of this psalm very appropriately after that of the twelfth section; which was the consolation invariably found by the afflicted believer in God through hope of beholding or sharing in the happy state of Israel on earth during the millennial age under the rule of the triumphant Messiah. Although God should not grant His afflicted servant relief in regard to the troubles of which he himself might be complaining, there still would be, as the psalmist seems to say, abundant encouragement afforded the believer to wait upon God in expectation of what God would eventually do for Israel in the earth.

Meanwhile heed to God's revealed word would teach the suffering believer what spiritual benefits the Lord was conferring on him while leaving him under affliction. Proceeding on the supposition that Daniel was the author of this hundred and nineteenth psalm, we may see by his book with what truth he could say, according to the first verse of this thirteenth section,

“Oh how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”

The next verse would also have a manifest adaptation to Daniel's eventful career in Babylon, supposing that he wrote

this psalm towards the close of his days, after deliverance from the lions' den in the reign of Darius. His words in that ninety-eighth verse being: "Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they (that is Thy commandments) are ever with me."

Thus in the second chapter of his book, at verse 13, when the decree had gone forth for the execution of the wise men of Babylon, owing to their inability to recover for Nebuchadnezzar the particulars of his dream, Daniel, by waiting upon God in prayer, obtained the desired information, by which he saved their lives, though they had been, and still continued, his enemies.

Also in the 99th verse, where it is written, "I have more understanding than all my teachers; for Thy testimonies are my meditation," it is to be observed, that whatever teachers Daniel might have had in childhood, before his carrying away in early youth to Babylon, he by meditation and communion with God obtained enlightenment in Scripture above all his contemporaries—an instance of which is given by him in the ninth chapter of his book at the second verse, where he wrote: "In the first year of the reign of Darius, I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem." For the same reason he could emphatically add in the 100th verse: "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts."

Now, "the precepts" are those parts of the revealed word which concern the believer's inner life toward God in personal holiness; and there cannot be a doubt that the psalmist here touches upon a most important point in the profitable use of God's revealed word. For it is elsewhere written upon this subject, "No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11); and in Ps. l. 27, "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."

The psalmist is undoubtedly referring to this subject when saying in the next verse, "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy word." The "feet" have already in treating of this psalm been explained to mean, when applied to the soul, its affections.

Now, to "refrain," or hold back these from every way which conscience, enlightened by the Divine precepts, shewed him to be evil, was a truly wonderful instance of upright walking with God. We Christians have far greater help than had Daniel to do this, yet how arduous do we find it to bear on our hearts before God this plea in the 101st verse: "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy word!"

St. Paul, speaking on this subject to the Galatians, at chapter v. 24, said, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts," or, in other words, its passive susceptibilities and active appetites.

The "flesh," or old man, has by nature a hold on the believer's heart: and the soul is required to redeem, by grace, that same heart's affections from being carried away after the promptings of the flesh, in order to be employed, as God's precepts inculcate, for the keeping of His word! (Eph. v. 14—16.) Such of us Christians as are engaged in this soul-service toward God with the heart, by grace, will own with confusion of face before Him how arduous this duty is, and how lamely performed at best.

Who of us knows not what the Apostle Paul calls "the sin that doth easily beset us" (Heb. xii. 1)—that to which our disposition hath a tendency?

What constant watchfulness is called for in the soul to prevent one's flesh or old man from carrying away the heart after its covetousness!

Yet we—Christians—have for the soul's help in this warfare the sight by faith of Christ crucified for such sinful inclinations as we are tempted to indulge in the heart: which made one of our sacred poets say:—

"O ye that love the Lord,  
If at this thought ye burn;  
See that in heart, in deed, in word,  
Ye hate what made Him mourn."

Moreover, awakened souls among us Christians, being regenerated in Christ, as baptism and the Lord's Supper certify to them, are incorporated with the Lord Jesus in His spiritual manhood, and also have it in their hearts; and this, with the godly motions proper thereto, is set over against "the motions of sins" in their old manhood. (Gal. v. 16, 17.) It must therefore be thankfully acknowledged that we who live in this advanced stage of the Church's pilgrimage on earth have, in the sight of Christ crucified for our sins, and in the bestowal of His Spiritual manhood for our regeneration, help for our souls in refraining our feet from heart-sin, "that we might keep His word," more than had any child of God who lived before Christ had accomplished his sacrificial death.

Until that time believers in the promise concerning Christ, from Abel downwards, on being justified by faith, might obtain a measure of the Spirit of Christ for their renewal, upon their daily asking for it (called in the psalm before us 'quickening'), but they had not regeneration (which I take to be participation in Christ's spiritual manhood, through burial by the Holy Ghost in His sacrificial death). (Titus iii. 4—7.) The psalmist, speaking by the Spirit of Christ in the 101st verse, would, we are sure, not take credit for more than he could call God to witness to be in his case the fact; he therefore could conscientiously say, "I have refrained my feet—the feet of my soul—from every evil way, that I might keep Thy word."

Not but what he had in his soul experienced many struggles against corrupt nature; but those adverse desires were not im-

puted to him by God, seeing that he had not harboured them, and so made them his own.

The psalmist could on this account say, in verse 102, "I have not departed from Thy judgments, for Thou hast taught me."

Oh how happy are they who in this arduous service to God with their souls can thus "hold faith with a good conscience" (1 Tim. i. 19), bearing in mind too that "they are in Christ and Christ in them;" as also that, by reason of the fruits of the Spirit abounding in them, they know that "He abideth in them." (1 John iii. 19--24; Rom. viii. 9; Matt. vii. 20.)

Then can we say, with all the fervour of the psalmist in the last two verses of this section:—

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

"Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

13.

Oh how love I Thy law! on it all day  
I ponder! Thou thro' Thy commandments hast  
Instructed me (for in my mind are they)  
Till I've my wisest enemies surpass'd  
In wisdom—yea, my teachers distanc'd fast  
In learning; for Thy testimonies were  
My meditation; more than they of old  
I understand, who for Thy precepts care.  
From ev'ry evil way, so as to hold  
Thy word in strictness, I've refrain'd my feet.  
Nor have I from Thy judgments swerv'd; for Thou  
Hast taught me! to my palate, oh! how sweet  
Thy words are, more than honey! here is how  
I thro' Thy precepts understanding get,  
And every false way most devoutly hate.

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FOURTEENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—NUN.

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ARGUMENT.

The psalmist in this fourteenth section continues to set forth the help which an afflicted servant of God derives from use of the holy Scriptures.

His testimony in the first of these verses implies, that occasions for error of judgment beset him, as though he was attempting to walk in darkness; and that only on having recourse to God's word had he a certain guide.

St. Paul's language concerning the Christian's position in the world, and need of Scripture for his guide is similar; where he saith (Rom. xiii. 13,) "The night is far spent—the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Also in Philip. ii. 14, he wrote, "Do all things without murmurings or disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless—the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."

The psalmist then saith,

"I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments."

Here be it observed, that the essence of an oath consists in the silent lifting up of the heart to God; and if one who doth this avows it to his neighbour, who is seeking his testimony, he virtually speaks upon oath, whatever be the form of words used by him.

As Jewish boys after circumcision at the eighth day on reaching the twelfth year were subjected by their doctors, at the feast of the Passover, to an examination into their acquaintance with the Commandments, and, if approved, were blessed with the laying on of hands; the psalmist when saying, "I have sworn," may only mean that on occasion of his examination by the doctors he acknowledged to them that he inwardly appealed to God to witness his resolve on keeping God's commandments.

The psalmist by adding, "and I will perform it," shewed his purpose of abiding by that engagement; and in this is an example to every Christian, who after baptism in infancy has at confirmation pledged himself to abide by the baptismal vow.

In the next verse the psalmist said,

"I am afflicted very much: quicken Thou me according to Thy word"—

thereby reminding us of the weariness and dejection produced by protracted affliction.

Now weariness is a great hindrance to godly service; so that the more affliction a servant of God has, the more incumbent it is on him to ask of God the grace of renewal with His holy Spirit.

When we offer up unto God a prayer wherein His promise forms the ground of our petition, we are sure of not failing here in attainment of our desire; provided we rightly urge it in reliance on Christ's propitiation and advocacy. This certainty of success



in so vital a matter is implied in the next verse by the psalmist saying,

"Accept, I beseech Thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me Thy judgments."

All the weariness produced by affliction had vanished, when the psalmist could ask God to accept the freewill offerings of his mouth. This thanksgiving was fruit rising to the lips out of a heart quickened according to the psalmist's desire.

But the closing petition, "Teach me Thy judgments," indicates, that though God had "created within him the fruit of the lips," (Isa. lvii. 19,) his consequent cheerfulness did not make him less mindful of the reverence due to God: he wished to "rejoice with trembling."

"Judgment" has been already explained to be a name for God's word, more particularly admonishing one of the awful sanction wherewith God, as Supreme Judge, waits to enforce it: so that the petition "Teach me Thy judgments," did in reality imply a desire on the psalmist's part to be made "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," (Isa. xi. 2,) concurrently with joy in the Lord through infusion of Christ's spirit into the heart.

Situate as the psalmist is supposed to have been in Babylon, no other offering could he bring to God than the free-will offering of his mouth: we Christians, however, have Christ's sacrifice freely provided for us, so that we need only plead it, when bringing the free-will offering of our lips. Nevertheless we shall do well to heed the lesson given us by the psalmist in verse 109, for he there made it evident, what need he had to walk warily, although gladdened at heart before God: by saying,

"My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget Thy law."

The soul is the moral responsible part of man. "Wherefore, to have the soul "in one's hand," is to have one's bodily or spiritual life dependent on what one may be required to do at a passing moment.

In 1 Sam. xix. 5, we have an instance of David putting his soul in his hand as to bodily life; and in the conduct of Peter, who entered the high priest's house to witness the trial of his Master, we have an instance of one putting his soul in his hand in regard to spiritual life. (Matt. xxvi. 69.)

The hurry of the crisis ordinarily excludes from a Christian's mind notice of any thing but what is on the instant externally pressing upon him.

But the psalmist saith, that in such a crisis, he was not unmindful of God's law, and was careful about behaving consistently with "obedience of the truth through the Spirit." (1 Pet. i. 21.)

He then indicated from whom the peril to his soul arose: saying in verse 110,

"The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I erred not from Thy precepts."

By "the wicked" are to be understood either evil spirits, or among men such as are fallen from grace—backslidden Israelites—like those mentioned in Jer. xxix. 21, 22. And when the psalmist saith, that in dealing with these he "erred not from God's precepts," we are to suppose he refers to such a word of Scripture, as that in Prov. xxv. 21, where we read,

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

"For thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head; and the Lord shall reward thee."

In following the psalmist's advice we Christians may similarly apply that other precept of St. Paul's in Rom. xii. 21.

"Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good."

By the psalmist's words in the next verse he makes it plain, that though this discipline should by God's appointment be lifelong, he would not repine: for he would have respect unto the recompence of reward, at the time of the Lord's return, even as St. Paul affirmed of Moses. (Heb. xi. 26.)

In this strain he said at verse 111,

"Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart."

God's testimonies are those portions of His written word in which He bears witness concerning His counsels.

The testimonies to which the psalmist more particularly referred, may probably have been those of the primeval Sabbath, as also of that specially given the Israelites in the wilderness, (Ezek. xx. 12,) the former of which was a pledge from God of what rest He will eventually give faithful servants with Himself in heaven—the latter, in the Lord's land during the Millennium to a chosen generation in Israel.

The psalmist, (whom we suppose to have been Daniel,) might hope alone for attainment of that final rest with God in the glorified body, whereof the primeval Sabbath was pledge to man, as we may gather from Dan. xii. 13; even as did Abraham. (See Heb. xi. 16.)

The same may also be said of us Christians whether out of Jews or Gentiles, who look, at the Lord's return, to be caught up to meet Him in the air. (1 Thess. iv. 14—18.)

But that "latter generation" of Israel spoken of in Ps. lxxviii. 4—6, will be afforded an opportunity of taking for an heritage on this earth, that foreshadowing of the rest in heaven, whereof the Sabbath given the Israelites in the wilderness was pledge.

The psalmist concludes this section with saying,

"I have inclined my heart to perform Thy statutes alway, even unto the end."

Or, to perform Thy statutes; for eternity—or in eternity—the hidden age—is the end or reward! (1 Pet. i. 9.)

By "the statutes" it has already been shewn are to be understood those portions of God's written word, whose force consists in their positive enactment; and which concern God's people collectively, in their congregational capacity.

Such an one, in the psalmist's day I suppose to have been that of praying with the face toward Jerusalem at stated times of the day, which in Daniel's case afforded his enemies the means of denouncing him to Darius as a breaker of the king's commandment. (Dan. vi.)

Similar statutes in our time are those of baptism and the Lord's supper—the observance of which makes believers in Christ avow their faith and become a visible congregation of faithful men at all risk. The psalmist therefore saith in effect that no matter what the public acknowledgment of faith in God might cost him, he would incline his heart to perform God's statutes, out of respect for the recompense of reward according as God had testified.

He would incline his heart unto performance of God's statutes, though the "end" to be gained—or the reward—should be "for eternity," or "for the hidden age," that is, only to be entered on with a glorified body, at the arrival of that hour appointed of God for bringing in His first-begotten into the world, as Moses in Ps. xc. verse 13—17, was moved to pray. (See also Ps. cxlix. 5—9.)

14.

Thy word's a lamp my wayward feet to guide,  
Unto my path a light! I have averr'd  
That by Thy righteous judgments I'd abide,  
And I'll perform this. Much have I incurr'd  
Of grief herein! according to Thy word  
O quicken me, Jehovah! Thee I pray,  
The free-will off'rings of my mouth receive!  
My soul, Thou know'st, is in my hand alway,  
Yet I Thy law forget not! for me weave  
The wicked snares, yet from Thy precepts I  
Ne'er err'd, as an eternal heritage  
Thy testimonies chose I joyfully,

For they my whole heart in Thy praise engage.  
To do Thy statutes I've my heart inclin'd,  
The mead<sup>1</sup> for that age hid content to find.

<sup>1</sup> Verse 112. Literally "end."

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FIFTEENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—SAMECH.

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ARGUMENT.

The leading idea in this section, connecting its eight verses, appears to be a protestation of unwavering faith in God.

In the first of these the psalmist's words are, "I hate vain or divided thoughts;" the word here used being the same which in 1 Kings xviii. 21, is used by Elijah when asking the people of Israel, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him."

St. James, in the first chapter of his Epistle, saith on this point: "Let a man ask in faith nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord. The double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

This meaning of the original word for "*vain* thoughts" brings out by contrast the decisive character of the psalmist's mind towards God, here implied in his use of the words "hate" and "love." "I hate halting between two opinions, but Thy law do I love."

The word in the next verse for "hiding-place" is that used in the first verse of the ninety-first psalm, where it is translated "the secret-place" of the Most High, meaning the Divine Nature itself.

Also in the fifth verse of the twenty-seventh psalm it has the same meaning, where the words are:

"In the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me."

This doctrine is even more emphatically inculcated on us, now that the sacrificial death of Christ is pleaded by Himself before God in our behalf; and we, for our faith, are buried by the Holy Ghost therein; and are required to daily devote ourselves thereto by a fresh act of faith, for the exclusion of all heretical and other disturbing thoughts, which would confuse single-hearted reliance upon God.

Such agents of double dealing and doubtful suspense, though only in thought, are rightly stigmatised by the psalmist in the following verse—the 115th—as “evil-doers;” for acts of the mind are in the sight of God “deeds,” quite as much as acts of the hand.

Loose notions in regard to true doctrine arrogantly insisted on; or disingenuous and hollow-hearted profession of the true, is at the bottom of all “evil-doing:” whilst love of that which God commands in His word and hatred of what He there forbids, is the very life of faith.

For “faith worketh by love.”

This solemn profession of decided zeal for God’s service is very fitly followed in the 116th verse with a petition, that God would uphold the psalmist in that pious resolve according to His word, “that,” saith he,

“I may live, and not be ashamed of my hope.”

For the wise man saith: “The hypocrite’s hope shall perish, when God taketh away his soul.” (Prov. x. 28, xi. 7.)

In the same strain he adds in the 117th verse:

“Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto Thy statutes continually.”

All which emphatically shews what need a believer has of habitual recourse to God in prayer for renewal with His Spirit: it may also be hence seen of what importance is continuance in a right frame of mind—that is, one characterised by respect for God’s statutes.

The two following verses of this section are to the same effect; because mentioning what God doth by way of punishment to them that have not respect unto His statutes.

“Thou hast trodden down all them that err from Thy statutes; for their deceit”—or specious excuse for halting between two opinions touching God’s word—“is falsehood.

“Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore I love Thy testimonies.”

In these two verses there appear to be included those, who in the first three had been stigmatised as sceptical in habit of mind, and “evil-doers.”

Here in the 118th verse, the speculative portion of them—whose error has been that of the mind and of the tongue alone, are to be punished by being “trodden down,” or, as the same word is translated in Job xxviii. 15 and 19, “weighed,” and found light and worthless; for their deceit—their specious show of wisdom—“is falsehood.” (Ephes. iv. 14 and 22.)

But those that break out into deeds legitimately springing out of such deceit, are to be by the refining effect of God’s judg-

ments "made dross;" that is, brushed off from the molten metal in the crucible. (Malachi iii. 3.)

The effect of all this upon the psalmist is stated in the last verse of these eight—the 120th—to be "fear" conjoined with "love," as set forth in the first of them, where he saith,

"My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments."

Agreeably wherewith St. Paul in 2 Cor. v. 11, saith for himself, "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"—an effect the very opposite to that which they, who halt between two opinions touching God's word, have upon their hearers.

For these embolden men to make light of God's word, which contains "the judgments of His mouth."

If the judgments of God's mouth, or in other words, the distinct declarations concerning the Divine sanctions in due time destined to enforce His truth, availed to restrain men generally from transgression, we may be persuaded that there would be little if any judgments of a more summary kind sent upon a nation.

So St. Paul saith in 1 Cor. xi. 31, where he wrote, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

Wherefore those casuistical minds which are prone to circulate sceptical thoughts concerning God's word; as for instance, in the matter of the duration of eternal punishment, thereby abating in their countrymen's minds that fear of sin which mention of eternal punishment was intended to produce, in reality only make judgments of a summary kind certain to come upon a nation. (Ezek. xiv.)

Those teachers are the truest friends of their nation, who exalt the majesty of God's word; so that they can say with the psalmist:

"My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments."

Assuredly whosoever trembles at the thought of being involved in such national judgments as that of war, which last year desolated France (1871); or of famine, which is now desolating Persia; ought with the psalmist to pray that the word alone of God—the judgments of His mouth—might have so salutary an effect upon them, that they might not need more summary judgments—the judgments of His finger or of His hand!

The unity of thought running through this fifteenth section is, I trust, manifest; and the conclusion we gather from it is, that in whatever other matters "lukewarmness" may be advisable and prudent, it is not in the service of God. The more enlightened men become by spiritual privileges, the more prone they are to subside into this cold calculating regulation of their

service to God by their intellect : the effect of which is forcibly described in our Lord's epistle to the Church of Laodicea. (Rev. iii. 14—19.)

This, as it seems to me, is the reason of the psalmist taking such pains here to testify on his own behalf, as a man thoroughly furnished unto every good work, that while he increased in light concerning God's will, he did not decline from love, nor gratitude, nor even dread.

15.

A sceptic's mood I execrate, but love  
Thy law ! I hide me in the secrecy  
Of Thy dread Being ! Thy good word doth prove  
My ground of hope. Haste ye ! begone from me,  
Ye evil-doers ! I'll keep jealously  
My God's commandments ! Do Thou me uphold  
According to Thy word ; that I may live,  
And not be by false hope deluded—sold.<sup>1</sup>  
Hold Thou me up ; for then my soul shall thrive ;  
And I'll unto Thy statutes stedfastly  
Give heed ! All they who from Thy statutes stray  
Thou'st weigh'd and cast down ; for their sophistry  
Is falsehood : like to dross Thou sweep'st away  
The wicked : hence Thy testimonies I  
Revere ; and scan Thy judgments tremblingly.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. l. 1 ; lii. 3 ; Rom. vii. 14.

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SIXTEENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—AIN.

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ARGUMENT.

The subject which connects together the eight verses of this fourteenth section is the godly man's entreaty that God would not forsake him, nor leave him a prey to his enemies inward or outward.

On the supposition that Daniel was the author of this psalm, and that he wrote it towards the end of his life, after release from the den of lions, how appropriately were the words of the 121st verse used by him :

"I have done judgment and justice."

By the book of Daniel we learn how, from early youth, he had been advanced to the highest offices, but had experienced as frequent removals therefrom, until brought into the reduced condition in which he wrote this psalm.

In the discharge of his high offices he must have habitually administered justice; so that, if he had been guilty of oppression, those that persecuted him in his adversity would have had some fair excuse to plead; but he could say, that he had "done judgment and justice." Nevertheless, he did not on this ground claim protection from God, as a right; for by the next verse we see that he placed his hope of safety in the worthiness of that Divine Person given by God to be the Advocate of His faithful servants. For he said in the 122nd verse—

"Be surety for Thy servant for good; let not the proud oppress me!"

The responsibility assumed by a Surety or Bail is well understood by us, who have in our courts use for the office. But it is highly interesting to see how early in the history of mankind this office came into use. In fact so early, that we are led to conclude our first parents received the idea of it from God Himself, by what they were taught, that the promised Seed of the woman should do for deliverance of those, who relied on His finished work, from all the consequences of the devil's fraud and malice.

The first mention of the name for this service is in Gen. xliii. 9, where Judah pledges himself to his father, that he will do all in his power to bring back Benjamin safe from Egypt, if only his father will allow him to take the lad down there.

"I will be surety for him," said Judah; "of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever."

The book of Job is among the very earliest extant; and in chap. xxxiii. 14—30, are recorded three different methods taken by God for awakenment of man out of deadness in trespasses unrepented of to lively faith in God through Christ: and in the second of these it is testified that when God has, by sickness, brought an ungodly man to the brink of the grave—"If there be a messenger with Him—an interpreter—one among a thousand—to shew unto man His uprightness"—in other words, if concurrently with the infliction of sickness God hath in His providence sent a minister of His way of reconciliation of sinners unto Himself, to shew unto the sufferer God's uprightness in chastising him—"Then He is gracious unto him, and saith (in effect) Deliver him from going down to the pit; that is, to everlasting death. I have found a ransom."

Now, ransom is that which the Surety should pay to God's



outraged justice, on behalf of the pardoned sinner whom the law would require to make the amends.

Accordingly, in that passage Job implies that God Himself is the provider of the Surety.

After the same manner the psalmist here asks God to be "surety for His servant for good."

In the thirty-eighth of Isaiah is an instance of prayer in deep distress, similar in all respects to this of the psalmist.

For Hezekiah, on being brought to the brink of the grave by a sore disease, pleaded, as we read at verse 3: "I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; and have done that which is good in Thy sight;" yet he did not rely on the worthiness of this service for reprieve from the grave; but, as we see at verse 14, added—

"Mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me"—the word being the same with that here translated "be surety"—Hezekiah's meaning being, that for the worthiness of the service which the sinner's Surety should in the sinner's nature render unto God, God would grant His penitent servant's petition for recovery.

If Daniel was, as we suppose, the author of this hundred and nineteenth psalm, he had Hezekiah's example before him; and in imitation of him prayed that God would be surety for him; so that for his Surety's worthiness, though not for his own, he might hope to obtain his desire. But in the next verse the psalmist makes it plain that he did not unconditionally ask for this bodily relief; for he said in verse 123—

"Mine eyes fail for Thy salvation, and for the word of Thy righteousness."

The psalmist hereby shewed himself aware of "salvation" and "righteousness" being that for which the Surety was expressly to be sent by God; so that, consequently, this spiritual blessing through Him might alone be asked for in an unqualified manner.

That this was the psalmist's meaning in using the words of verse 123 will be evident when we observe how in Isa. li., at verse 4, the God of Israel had promised by the mouth of that prophet:—

"Hearken unto Me, My people, . . . for a law shall proceed from Me . . . My righteousness is near . . . My salvation is gone forth" . . . and again at verse 6: "My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished;" and again at verse 8: "My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation."

Observe how these words "salvation" and "righteousness" are there repeated in this announcement of what the Surety for Israel, Whom God would send, should bring them.

There can be no doubt that the psalmist, in coupling together these words "salvation" and "the word of God's righteousness"

Thy testimonies. Now is it a time  
 For Thee to work, Jehovah; for Thy law  
 They've banished; I 'bove gold, yea 'bove  
 Gold Thy commandments love, and hunger for  
 Thy precepts: and all false ways I abhor.

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## SEVENTEENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—P.E.

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### ARGUMENT.

The leading idea in this seventeenth section it appears to me to be, that whereas the psalmist was mourning for the hiding of God's face, he would patiently seek re-enlightenment therewith in His written word.

The "testimonies" are those portions of Holy Scripture wherein God bears witness concerning heavenly things. (1 John v. 7.)

Since neither the word "prophecy" nor that of "promise" occurs in this psalm, wherein the sundry departments of God's word are carefully distinguished and reckoned up, it seems to me probable that the writer of this hundred and nineteenth psalm included them both in the word "testimonies."

Unquestionably, whenever in Scripture God hath made known things done by Him or to be done, which could not otherwise have been known by man, such statements are His testimony.

The account of the Creation in the commencement of Genesis is to be so called; so too is His revealed purpose of recovering fallen man through the promised Seed of the Woman to that rest with Himself after this life originally intended for man, as typified in the gift of the Sabbath.

Well may the psalmist say, these testimonies are wonderful; that is, worthy of being contemplated with admiration—

"Therefore doth my soul keep them,"

that is, lay them up in memory: as in Luke ii. 51, it is written that the Virgin Mary "kept all the sayings of the holy Child, and pondered them in her heart."

Again, another class of testimonies equally wonderful is of those which might be called "promises." As where it is written in Ps. xxxii. verse 8—

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye."

Or again in the fiftieth psalm, verse 15—

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

These testimonies or promises are “wonderful” for the condescension they betoken on God’s part towards us; and consequently deserve to be before all things kept by the soul in remembrance, that they may be meditated on.

By the next verse—the 130th—the psalmist shews how the hearer, whose soul thus keeps God’s testimonies is benefited.

“The entrance of God’s word giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

We have assumed that the psalmist is in this 17th section describing what he did, as a godly man, while he mourned for the hiding of God’s face.

We say then that a certain measure of light was to be hoped for by him under his depression in the devout reception of God’s testimonies. He was not one that could be called “simple,” for he was a veteran; but what he means is that there was no one so simple but would get light by reading them.

In the Book of Proverbs, the “simple” are contrasted with “the subtle;” as in the 4th verse of the first chapter, where we read, that the Book of Proverbs was written under the guidance of the Holy Ghost—

“To give subtlety to the simple; to the young man knowledge and discretion.”

Again, at the 15th verse of the 14th chapter, “the simple” are contrasted with “the prudent,” where we read, “The simple believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going.”

Now in regard to the testimonies of God in Scripture, the beginner may safely “believe every word,” and so too may he that by long acquaintance with it has been made in the good sense “subtle.” He too may well be “simple” in regard to believing every word thereof in a child-like and dependent frame of mind, when he is mourning at the hiding of God’s countenance.

For there is no better way than this of waiting for light and understanding in the fear of the Lord; although he may yet miss “the lifting up of the Lord’s countenance upon him, to put joy and gladness into his heart, more than they have whose corn and wine and oil are increased.” (Ps. iv. 6, 7.)

In the next verse—the 131st—the psalmist, as it seems to me, exemplifies for us in his own person the mental state of such a simple enquirer into the wonders of God’s testimonies, while mourning in the way described; whereby he shewed, (may we not say?) that notwithstanding his long experience he retained the simplicity and ingenuousness of life’s morning. “I opened my mouth,” said he, “and panted,” or drew in my breath from the quicker beating of the heart through emotion, “for I longed for Thy commandments,” that is, I wished to have “the power” thereof infused into me.

For St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. iv. 20, "The kingdom of God is not in word but in power,"—that is, comparatively, not so much in the one as rather in the other—for this "power" denotes to the waiting believer God's giving of it effect in his heart; whereby the desired evidence of the light of God's countenance being lifted up on him is in a measure regained. After this protestation of the psalmist's endeavour by use of God's testimonies to come out from under the gloom produced in him by the hiding of God's countenance, he in the next four verses betakes himself to prayer to the same end.

"Look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy Name.

"Order my steps in Thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion in me.

"Deliver me from the oppression of man, so will I keep Thy precepts.

"Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes."

These four petitions have direct reference to what has been assumed to be the leading idea in this section, connecting together its eight verses.

This subject is concluded by the psalmist's protestation of his grief at hearing and seeing the dishonour done to God's law: saying,

"Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law."

As the psalmist is supposed by us to have been Daniel, and that he was in the midst of the idolatries of Babylon, we may well imagine, that look where he would, he saw and heard things that grieved him, because contrary to the only true worship. But even these would not so much move him as the declensions from true doctrine, nay even excesses in blasphemy, that his back-sliding countrymen ran into, as testified in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These latter may be readily conceived to have drawn copious tears from his eyes; for if we ourselves in this favoured land, when only reading utterances by infidel lecturers find tears starting to our eyes, how much more would they be wrung from us were we actually hearing such blasphemies—such for instance as the requisitionists of political meetings on Sundays in the parks of the metropolis are guilty of, who hire two or three companies to be in attendance, singing mock litanies? It is the lot of pious people at times to mourn the hiding of God's face from them, and under such circumstances there is danger of their drifting like inanimate logs on a stream; whereas they ought to stem the current setting in against them, with grace gained through prayer in the name of Jesus.

For those, who will so do, there is made ready to hand, in this

section, a form of words which they should take and plead before the Lord with other such out of their own heart, until He shall have mercy on them.

It is the emphatic testimony of our Lord, as is to be seen in Luke xviii. 1, that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

God's hiding of His face is seen in Scripture to have been often intended to increase His believing people's earnestness, and to quicken them in fervent prayer. (Matt. xv. 28.)

Those that so wait on Him, and make His testimonies the ground of their petitions, cannot fail of obtaining in His good time all their desire.

17.

How wonderful Thy testimonies are!  
 My soul doth keep and ponder them! What light  
 Thy words do by their very entrance bear!  
 Making the simple understand aright!  
 With lips apart through sheer emotion white—  
 The blood all mantling at the heart—I yearn'd  
 For Thy commandments! With benign aspect  
 Look on me, as Thou did'st on Him that burn'd  
 Of old with love of Thy great Name! Direct  
 My footsteps in Thy word. Arrest the sway  
 Of sin within me. From man's pow'r set free  
 Thy servant who Thy precepts will obey.  
 Oh shine on me propitious, and teach me  
 Thy statutes! Tears gush freely from mine eyes  
 For grief at all them who Thy law despise.

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EIGHTEENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—TZADDI.

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ARGUMENT.

The leading idea in this section appears to me to be the psalmist's resolve to cleave to the righteousness of God.

In the former section we supposed, that while mourning the hiding of God's countenance, he set himself to recover re-illumination therewith in meditation on God's written word.

And although he was refreshed in that study by perception within him of the power accompanying that word, being not yet fully re-established in the light of God's countenance, he in this portion sets himself on seeking further refreshment by consciously cleaving unto the righteousness of God.

To shew how this idea is kept by the psalmist in view through the eight verses of this section shall now be my endeavour; after which shall be added a few observations upon the righteousness of God, what it is, and how it is to be received and used by us according to the clear light touching it vouchsafed to the Christian Church in the New Testament.

The psalmist's words in verse 137—

“Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments,”

may be taken to be a pious indication on his part of God's dealing with him; while delaying to lift up on him, as before, the light of His countenance.

He utters it in the persuasion of God having some good purpose towards him in prolonging his affliction: he then approaches the subject which has been assumed to have been held before his mind throughout this section, namely, the righteousness of God.

His words in the 138th verse are—

“Thy testimonies which Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.”

“Testimonies” are those portions of God's word wherein He bears witness to things that He has done or will do, or “has commanded,” which could not otherwise have been known.

That God will count a man's faith in His promise unto him for righteousness is unquestionably one of these testimonies, that He hath commanded; and is, according to our assumption, that one here specially referred to.

The psalmist then proceeds to say in verse 139—

“My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.”

Now that the psalmist's enemies should have “forgotten” His words implies that they once knew and held them: consequently these “enemies” could not be heathens, but renegades—of the psalmist's own nation. On the assumption that the psalmist was Daniel, whom we know to have experienced great vicissitudes during his eventful life, we suppose, that while he was in high office his enemies were “princes,” verse 23: but, that at the time of his writing this psalm, or here in this part of his psalm describing his state when thrust down in his old age into poverty, his backsliding—nay blaspheming—fellow-captives taunted him and exalted themselves above him.

Their tenets and ways of living may be gathered from Jere-

miah's notices of them in chap. xxix. 20—32, and Ezekiel's in chap. iii. 5—9 and xiii. 3—23.

In vain did the psalmist spend his strength with an energy too exhausting for one of his years, in combatting their errors—their will was depraved, and they would not receive correction.

It is possible that the psalmist more especially remonstrated with the more decorous portion of his fellow-captives, whom Ezekiel in chap. xiv. 3 describes as making a profession of desire to be instructed by God's true prophet, but without any intention of doing what he told them—which would literally be "forgetting God's words."

That mention of the good words forgotten the psalmist makes the occasion of pursuing the thread of his reasoning in this section ; saying at verse 140—

"Thy word is very pure ; therefore Thy servant loveth it."

The original word here used by the psalmist differs from that in the preceding verse similarly translated.

For this word here used is the same which in verse 123 had been expressed in full, as "The word of God's righteousness," which, it has been contended throughout this comment, is the sense which ought to be put on it wherever it occurs in this psalm.

What the psalmist here saith of it is apparently quoted from Ps. xii. 6, where it is clear that to be "pure" means to be purified, as "silver tried seven times in the fire:" that is to say ; whether it be "forgotten" (as was the case with the psalmist's enemies) or slighted and scouted, as in Ps. xiv. 6, by self-righteous zealots seeking to justify themselves before God by their performance of His law in its letter, ceremonial and moral ; the psalmist could say from experience that the word of God's righteousness could stand every trial, and be as free from flaw, as that silver purified seven times from dross.

In this expressive way the psalmist sets forth the comfort brought to a penitent believer in God's promise on this head, by having for a free gift such a dress of honour—such a wedding garment—given one by God, wherein to appear before Him as an accepted guest. (2 Kings x. 22.) There is no flaw in it. Whoso is seeking of God the lifting up of His countenance upon him (Numb. vi. 26), as we suppose the psalmist to have been, gratefully records the happiness he feels on this account, because of its purity : whereas his own righteousness by comparison is as filthy rags—(Isa. lxiv. 6)—"therefore it is he loves it."

The psalmist then proceeds in the next verse—the 141st—to shew, that he did not, like those "enemies" of his, "forget" or ignore the obligation—that gift of righteousness laid upon the wearer, to use it in doing God's bidding.

"I am small," said he, "and despised"—being fallen from my worldly eminence into a low estate in which even my fellow-captives set me at naught—"yet do I not forget Thy precepts."

The psalmist here refers to a well-known fact in society; namely, that those who take up religion in order "to be seen of men," make much of what falls under men's observation; and if by reason of official dignity in a prominent position hold themselves bound to rigid observance of its rules in regard to public worship, fasting, almsgiving, and so forth; but if fallen into so low a condition as to be unable to gain men's notice and praise; then letting it drop, as "without its reward." (Matt. vi. 1-7.)

In emphatic contrast herewith the psalmist saith, that "small" as he is and "despised," yet being a believer in the word of God's righteousness, and pressing the honoured raiment to his bosom, he would use it, (and the acceptance with God which it conferred, while imputed to one in return for one's faith,) in "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God." (Micah vi. 8.)

The "precepts" are those portions of God's word which concern men's private conversation and inner life; in most of which it is impossible for one man to know whether or not another observes them: wherein, consequently, one with the direct intent of his mind serves the All-seeing God, and seeks to be guided by His eye. (Ps. xxxii. 8.)

This is the worthy use of "The righteousness of God," whereto the psalmist's enemies "forgot" to put it. (Ezek. xxxiii. 30-33.)

The psalmist then fully describes what in verse 140 he had in brief, when quoting from Ps. xii. 6, called "God's word:" saying, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law—truth."

We suppose the psalmist to have here had before his mind Isa. li. 4, where God by that prophet testifies that "a law shall proceed from Him"—consequently different, as Justin Martyr argues, from that which God had given ages before by Moses.

That law is, as Justin observes, the one sent down from heaven from God by the Lord Jesus after His Ascension upon His apostles: of which St. Paul speaks in Rom. viii. 2, saying, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and of death."

Now the law of the Spirit of life is the infusion of Christ's Spirit—the Spirit of adoption—given by the Father, for only asking, to him who wears the righteousness of Christ by faith, as his wedding garment.

This renewal by the Holy Ghost is a "law" or system of operation by God in Christ, different from that given by God to Moses; which was of letter, however "pure and just and good;" so that it condemned more surely the man that being unrenewed



remained subject to original sin in his members derived from his fallen first parents: and this original sin because of its systematic operation, by means of sinful lusts in warring against the soul (1 Pet. ii. 11) is called by St. Paul in Rom. viii. 2 "the *law* of sin and of death," as St. Chrysostom shews *in loco*.

Hence the psalmist in saying "Thy law is truth" means that it is so in contrast with that of Moses.

This law, to be obtained for only asking, by him who through faith wears the righteousness of God, is "a power"—an energising "operation of God" (Col. ii. 12)—in the same sense wherein Jesus calls Himself "the truth" or reality of the promise or profession. (John xiv. 6.)

The psalmist then reverts to the lack of comfort in regard to the lifting up of God's countenance upon him, for which he still mourned; but added that "God's commandments," such as that in Isa. l. 10, 11, "were his delights." Subjoining in verse 144—

"The righteousness of Thy testimonies—that is, whereto Thou testifiest in Thy word—is not merely for our use by faith in this life, but shall be our clothing for ever." (Isa. xlv. 23—25; li. 6. Jer. xxiii. 5—8. Dan. xi. 7. 2 Thess. i. 10.)

The latter clause of this verse—

"Give me understanding and I shall live,"

is a prayer for the fulness of the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, according to Isa. xi. 2, 3. With this, the psalmist saith, he should endure as long as the righteousness wherein he was glorying. (John xiv. 19.)

We who live at this advanced stage of the Church's progress know that the righteousness of God, which St. Paul in Rom. iii. and iv. and Gal. iii. shews to have been from the time of man's fall the appointed way of a believer's justification before God, is that fulfilment of the law moral and ceremonial wrought by Jesus in the days of His mortal flesh, made ours for our faith, when the Holy Ghost buries us forthwith into His sacrificial death (John v. 24); whereupon, as grafts knit to their stocks, we are joined unto Christ, and have all that He is, and has suffered and earned, made ours in God's sight—in very deed; as testified in 2 Cor. v. 21: so that the justice of God finds no flaw in us as Christ's members—forbearing to charge our defects upon us; because of Jesus, as a Man, having while on earth upheld it to perfection—loving God with all His heart every moment of His natural life as required by the first table, and His neighbour as Himself, according to the second; and then yielded Himself up to be in the providence of God liberator of us from the law's demand of our lives, by the surrender of His own.

But whereas Satan hurried men to great excess, as Chrysostom shews, in thus procuring death under the law for Him Who had done no sin, God retributively gave His Son for a recompence in

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the new and spiritual life, the souls and bodies of His elect which in strictness of the letter had for their sin been according to law Satan's lawful captives; that His Son might see of the travail of His soul till He should be satisfied! (Isa. liii. 11.)

18.

Righteous art Thou, Jehovah, and upright  
Thy judgments; so the testimonies too  
Thou hast commanded are in good men's sight  
Righteous and faithful; but when from their view  
Mine en'mies let them slip, zeal warm and true  
Consum'd me! fully is Thy saying tried,  
Wherefore Thy servant loveth it! Though small  
I am and slighted, ne'er set I aside  
Thy precepts. Lo! a righteousness for all  
Forth-coming ages is Thy righteousness!  
And Thy law, truth! On me tho' trouble seize  
And anguish, Thy commandments I possess  
In recollection, and by them find ease.  
For ever lives Thy righteousness! O give  
Me understanding and I too shall live.

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NINETEENTH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—KOPH.

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ARGUMENT.

It was shewn in the two sections last preceding how the psalmist would have a faithful man, situated as he was, seek to recover the light of God's countenance by devout meditation on Holy Scripture, and steadfast choice of God's righteousness.

Now, therefore, in this nineteenth section he resumes prayer, which may be reckoned the leading idea of this section. Three things he in express terms asked for:—

in the 145th verse, to be heard;

in the 146th, to be saved;

in the 149th, to be quickened.

These mercies he entreated God to vouchsafe, not that he might live after his own pleasure, but that he might the better keep God's statutes and God's testimonies.

He pleads in the 147th and 148th how his earnestness was testified by rising up to prayer before break of day, and by securing a season for meditation before the night watches; which

with the Jews were three in number, of four hours each, from sunset to sunrise. (Mark xiii. 35.)

In the 149th he makes God's loving-kindness a ground of encouragement in prayer, adding, in verse 150, mention of danger being near; which he balanced in his mind by glorifying God in the 151st verse for being likewise near; whereof God's commandments and testimonies gave him warrant for being persuaded.

Such are the contents of this nineteenth section, and they seem to me descriptive of the condition which a ripe Christian abides in while on earth. He can never get beyond the need of fervent prayer to be "heard;" "saved," or kept in the state of salvation as a member of "Christ's mystical body;" and "quickened," or renewed, day by day with a measure of Christ's Spirit.

Earnestness in prayer, as evidenced by employing therein the first thoughts on waking, and by meditation to that end at even, will be found, I doubt not, by the pious Christian to mark his habit of mind more and more as he draws toward the end of his earthly course.

Mention also of the loving-kindness of God will, it is to be expected, be recorded more and more tenderly as he becomes the more keenly aware of his dependence on it; and the promise of God to be near them that call upon Him will be prized the more, while he grieves at seeing how his inward foes are no more to be driven utterly out of him than are his flesh and bone.

To effectual fervent prayer it is indispensable that a worshipper should be able to say, as doth the psalmist in this 145th verse—

"I cried with my whole heart":—

asking God, Who seeth in secret, to bear witness that one doth so.

The difficulty found by a faithful man in doing this explains to him the reason of his being left with various trials, which threaten to overpower him. Were it not for the sense of frailness which is salutarily produced in him by these trials, he would forget his need of God's sustaining grace.

Of this St. Paul received explicit assurance, as is written in 2 Cor. xii. 7, where we read, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me; lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness; most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

At verses 145, 146, 147, 148, we see extolled,

the keeping of God's statutes—

the keeping of His testimonies—

the practice of prayer at first awaking—

the practice of meditation on God's word before close of the eyes at night in sleep—

as being the habits of a ripe servant of God, such as the psalmist was.

But for all that our reason and conscience consent hereto, and endorse this counsel, nothing but the dread of mischief from inward foes will ordinarily drive one to make the course of conduct, so commended, his own.

If what the testimonies of God say on this point could by His grace avail to make us prayerful, after the manner here enjoined, then might we expect to be ordinarily spared more summary chastisements.

If our flesh trembles at thought of God in faithfulness laying on us summary judgments, we ought to admonish ourselves about attention to such testimonies concerning His service, as that in this nineteenth section of the psalm before us. We ought to dutifully plead before Him, that His words alone shall suffice to make us seek Him in the use of His statutes and testimonies.

Mere bodily acts in compliance with these counsels have a constantly decreasing effect, till they are hardly noticed, and forgotten the minute they are over. I mean the mere formal recital of prayers at first awaking or reading of a portion of Scripture before going to bed, though seemingly pious, loses its effect on the user; as is proved by our forgetting whether we have wound up our watch a few minutes after having done so; but acts of the mind the oftener they are repeated gain the greater power over one, till they control the whole man. Only that prayer, therefore, at waking (James i. 24, 25), and that reading before going to bed, which is done with faith, and with the whole heart, and with appeal to God, Who seeth in secret—such as the psalmist uses in the first verse of this section—has an influence for good upon the user of the counsel herein.

Where, however, these services to God are done with the mind and heart, it is a comfort to know that they become the easier the longer they are continued in; and they bring the soul a sweet consolation of their own in the performance of them, which, when once arrived at, abundantly rewards the worshipper for all his weary controversy with himself; and is to be regarded by him as work wrought in Christ, which shall not disappoint the doer.

For in Christ God has laid the foundation, on which whosoever buildeth, shall without fail receive the fruit of his labour, in the day when God judgeth the secrets of men according to Christ's Gospel. (1 Cor. iii. 11—15, and iv. 3—5; Rom. ii. 16.)

For the psalmist unquestionably referred to God's promise concerning Christ (Isa. xxviii. 16; Ps. lxxxvii. 5), when saying in the last verse of this section—

“Concerning Thy testimonies I have known of old, that Thou hast founded them for ever.”

19.

With my whole heart I cried to Thee,  
 Jehovah! I'll Thy statutes choose!  
 To Thee I cried, O save Thou me,  
 And I'll Thy testimonies use.  
 Before there 'd melted the morn's dews  
 I'd ris'n to pray, and in Thy word  
 I hop'd; and ere night's watches to dilate  
 In thought upon Thy saying I preferr'd.  
 After thy loving-kindness hear  
 My voice, Jehovah! quicken me,  
 According to Thy judgment! they draw near  
 That follow after mischief—far they be  
 From Thy law! but the while Thou'st near me staid.  
 Lo! Thy commandment's truth! Of old, I said,  
 Thy testimonies Thou'st established.

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TWENTIETH SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—RESII.

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ARGUMENT.

In sundry places of the Old Testament God is spoken of as daily exercising the office of a judge: as, for instance, where it is said in Ps. lxxxii. 1, "God standeth in the congregation of princes. He is a Judge among gods."

Also in Ps. xlv. 20 we read: "If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to any strange god, shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart."

Also in Jer. xvii. 10 we read: "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins; even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

In this sense, then, it seems to me that the judgment of God is appealed to throughout this section.

Hence the psalmist's supplication in this section unto his Judge may be taken for an intentional exemplification of what the devout servant of God needs to do; and consequently is the leading doctrine linking together and giving unity to the eight verses of this section.

In the 153rd verse the psalmist saith unto God, as Judge of the use whereto he is putting the means of grace within his

reach, "Consider mine affliction, and deliver me; for I do not forget Thy law."

Now, in the 142nd verse, where this word "law" occurs, it has, as we trust, been conclusively shewn that by it is meant not that code delivered to Moses, but that promised in Isa. li. 4; and what strengthens me in coming to this conclusion is the petition in the 154th verse:

"Plead my cause and deliver—or rather 'redeem'—me; quicken me, according to Thy word, or saying."

For here is a direct reference to that doctrine of God acting as Judge in the congregation of His people day by day; whence it follows that man is required to be, day by day, justified before Him, in His court of law as it were: to which end it was understood, at least as far back as the delivery of the Levitical law, that God would give the penitent worshipper, One to plead his cause.

Furthermore, by Deut. xix. 1—12, the institution of the cities of refuge, and the right given the nearest male relative of one slain to be avenger of his blood, were intended to foreshew to what extent the promised Seed of the woman, Who should be God as well as man, should as man's nearest of kin be Avenger of his blood upon Satan his murderer; (John viii. 44.) even to the extent of laying down His own life, as man, for the ransom of man.

Similar mention of services to be fulfilled by the Divine Advocate given man by God to plead their cause in the Court of Heaven, occur in sundry places of the Psalms (*e.g.* in Ps. lxi. 18, and lxxii. 14, 15.)

But more ancient parts of Scripture, as Job xix. 25, xxiii. 6, 7, xxxiii. 24, shew that in patriarchal times God's children had the comfort of knowing that He had given them One in union with Himself to plead their cause before Him daily, and redeem them.

And they were left to conclude, that through the merits of His intercession on their behalf, when laying before God their prayer, they should obtain, on asking for it, a measure of the Spirit of God for their renewal from day to day (Gen. vi. 3; Ps. li. 10; 2 Peter i. 4), after the same manner in which the psalmist here doth this.

For the quickening, which he solicits, is that by renewal with the Spirit of God (Isa. xlv. 3), which the psalmist significantly entreats God to grant "according to His word"—the original term denoting, that he hereby meant God's "saying" by His prophet—called in full at verse 123 "the word of His righteousness." (John viii. 51.)

Then in verse 155 he significantly added, "Salvation is far from the wicked, for they seek not Thy statutes."

The occurrence here of the word 'salvation' in connection with what, in the preceding verse, is spoken on the subject of

man's justification in the court of God's judgment, confirms me in the persuasion, that 'law' in verse 153 is to be taken for "the system of operation carried on in one that is renewed by the Spirit of life." (Rom. viii. 2.)

For in Isa. li. 4, 5, the terms 'law,' 'judgment,' 'righteousness,' and 'salvation,' stand in juxtaposition, as being parts of God's mode of procedure in His court of judgment.

The "wicked man," who for the time present is judged by God to be such, is one who has relinquished use of the means of grace through impenitence.

Such an one is far from the 'salvation' of God, which the psalmist was then seeking in the use of God's statutes; as is to be gathered from the 153rd and 154th verses; and it is sufficient for his condemnation at that present by his Judge, to say that "he doth not seek God's statutes." For "to leave undone the things we ought to have done" of itself procures condemnation (James iv. 17), which may become more and more aggravated, by "doing those things which we ought not to have done."

For where a man is "far from salvation" there is no health in him.

Health and cure (Jer. xxxiii. 6) are God's gift by bestowal of His Spirit, which His statute requires us to seek of Him with the help of that God-man given us to be our Advocate.

In the 156th verse the psalmist, in continuation of his supplication unto his Judge, thankfully records how great are God's tender mercies felt by him to be; and he seems to me to pray, that God out of these merciful considerations, in viewing his affliction, would "quicken him according to His judgments" or awards, from day to day, as Supreme Judge of the worshipper in whose behalf the appointed Advocate is pleading. (Ps. cxliii. 2; Heb. vi. 17, 18.)

He then urges his need of speedy help; saying—

"Many are my persecutors and mine enemies, yet I do not decline from Thy testimonies."

By which we may understand him to mean, that conscious sins of infirmity (Ps. lxxv. 3) would strike him dumb, were it not that he remembered how God had testified to this effect: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." (Ps. l. 15.)

In the 158th verse the psalmist said—

"I beheld the transgressors, or covenant-breakers; and was grieved"—or turned away from the sight with emotion—"because they kept not Thy word" or saying—the word of Thy righteousness.

These I take to be the same class as were above called "wicked;" who, being fellow-countrymen of the psalmist, had all been brought by circumcision within the bond of the covenant of

their God : many of them also, after approval by their doctors, having been pronounced "sons of the Commandment."

Nevertheless, they kept not the saying of God by His prophets—kept it not in their heart to ponder on it—such a saying, to wit, as that in Isa. li. 4.

Here again it is to be observed that to "leave undone what one ought to have done," suffices to make him who is in covenant with God, a breaker thereof—one to be grieved for, and turned away from with emotion (2 Tim. iii. 5; Titus iii. 10, 11), if persistently impenitent.

In contrast herewith the psalmist protests before his Judge, how different is his own mind, as a seeker of His statutes.

"Consider," are his words at verse 159, "how I love Thy precepts.

"Quicken me, O Lord, according to Thy loving kindness."

"The precepts" being those parts of God's written word which concern each individual, and regulate his inner life: love of these (which is to be only seen of God) attests the psalmist's faithful keeping of God's covenant.

In verse 160 the psalmist glorifies God as His Supreme Judge, by saying, "Thy word at outset was truth; and every one of Thy judgments to eternity" (is so likewise).

The occasional reference to God's judgments throughout these eight verses of the 20th section will, I trust, be held by the reader to warrant my assumption in the first instance that the thought of God being the believer's Judge, Who scrutinises what use he makes of the means of grace at his disposal, is the leading doctrine dwelt on herein.

According to this view prominence is here given to a doctrine which, when grasped by the mind, exercises a salutary discipline over us, who are in covenant with God by baptism.

Very distinct are the notifications furnished by our Saviour, of God being from day to day the Judge, before Whom we "stand" by faith. (1 Cor. x. 12, 13.)

One important passage to this effect is in Matt. v. 25, where the Judge must be God; for none but He has such "a prison as none shall come out from, till he shall have paid the uttermost farthing."

Also in John viii. 50, where Jesus saith, "I seek not Mine own glory; there is ONE that seeketh and judgeth."

His Father is shewn to be, day by day, Observer of the use whereto the members of Christ's mystical body put the means of grace within their reach.

But in John xv. 1, 2, is a very precise testimony on this point, where He saith, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman.

"Every branch in Me, that beareth not fruit, He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit."



St. Peter too, in 1st Ep. ch. i. 17th verse, very clearly speaks of the Father as day by day exercising the office which the psalmist, in this twentieth section, ascribes to Him, when he wrote—

“If ye call upon the Father, Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work;

“Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, knowing that ye have not been redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Here is fully revealed that doctrine concerning what John calls our Propitiation and our Advocate (1 Ep. ii. 2), which the psalmist referred to when saying—

“Plead Thou my cause, and redeem me.”

Let us then, all, daily “study to shew ourselves approved unto God,” solemnly considering that “not to seek God’s statutes” and “not to keep His saying” is to leave undone that which we ought to have done; and this is to be “wicked” and to be a “transgressor” or breaker of the baptismal covenant.

Like the psalmist, let us seek to be at the time present clean through Christ’s word (John xv. 3); that so we may acceptably ask through Him, as our Propitiation and Advocate after the manner of the psalmist, that the Supreme Judge would “quicken us” with a measure of the Spirit of Christ,

According to His “saying,”

According to His “judgments,”

According to His “loving kindness.”

20.

See mine affliction, and deliv’rance give!

Ne’er would I of Thy law forgetful be.

Plead Thou my cause and me from death retrieve,

According to Thy saying quicken me!

Salvation’s from the wicked known to be

Far off, for they Thy statutes do not prize.

Vast are Thy tender mercies! quicken me

According to Thy judgments! Enemies

Be many, but Thy testimonies lo!

I cherish! Cov’nant-breakers in mine eyes

Are to be shudder’d at, Thy saying who

Keep not. My love unto Thy precepts see!

And of Thy loving-kindness quicken me,

Jehovah! As at first Thy word was truth,

So shall be every judgment of Thy mouth.

TWENTY-FIRST SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—SCHIN.

ARGUMENT.

As the last four portions have been shewn to describe what service the devout believer, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, is while in this life called to render in worship of God; so, as it seems to me, do these two remaining ones.

Throughout this twenty-first section is shewn, as it seems to me, what it is to walk with God, as did Enoch.

Whoso doth this, must hearken unto God's word; and in every one of the eight verses composing this twenty-first section, the psalmist protests that he doth this.

Here then, as it seems to me, is to be discerned the leading doctrine in this section—what it is to walk with God.

First of all, where the psalmist saith at verse 161—

“Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of Thy word.”

I suppose Daniel to speak retrospectively, being then at the close of life, and to assert that so salutary an influence had the word of God over him from early days, so authoritatively did it weigh upon his mind, that when the mighty princes of an absolute sovereign, as that in Babylon, threatened him with the monarch's sorest displeasure, unless Daniel complied with their will, “He feared not the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.” (Heb. xi. 27.)

Agreeably herewith it is written in Prov. xxix. 25, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”

Many exemplifications of this testimony occur in the history of the Israelites. As for instance in Exod. xxxiv. 12, where God said, “Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest; lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee.

“But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.

“For thou shalt worship no other god: For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

The subsequent history of the Israelites shews that through fear of the Canaanites they did what God had here forbidden, and were ensnared into worship of idols to their own ruin by loss of God's favour. A precisely similar trial was in the providence of God brought upon Daniel, but under what different circumstances! Instead of being of a victorious nation and one dominant in the land, (as was the case with the Israelites in Joshua's

day, and subsequently,) Daniel was of the same people when driven from their own land into captivity, and subject to the sway of princes bent on exacting from him homage to their idols. Daniel could look back through a long life passed under this ordeal, and say that even when princes were in wrath standing over him with menacing looks, their words had not the power over him which God's written word had: awe of which was in his heart.

These instances wherein Daniel had so often driven out the fear of princes by the superior fear for God according to His word, deserved to be remembered by him as long as he lived and to be commemorated before God.

In the same spirit the psalmist went on to say in verse 162—

"I rejoice at Thy word,"—Thy saying—"the word of Thy righteousness," verse 123—"as one that findeth great spoil."

Here, as it seems to me, he testified that increased insight granted him into God's word, in recompense for his continuance in it, bred in his heart a joy, because of communion thereby with God, which might be compared to that which soldiers on the battlefield feel, when winning great spoil.

In the next verse—the 163rd—in continuation of the same subject, he saith—

"I hate and abhor lying; but Thy law do I love"—

where I take 'lying' to mean disappointing of God by double-dealing through fear of man, as in Isa. lxiii. 8, and Jer. xv. 18.

In the next verse—the 164th—he adds on the same subject—

"Seven times a day"—a definite number for an indefinite—"do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments."

Here 'judgments' are, as it seems to me, to be understood, according to the explanation in the preceding section, to mean God's awards upon scrutiny into His people's faithfulness, or otherwise, in use of the means of grace within their reach; all of which are to be learnt by means of His word.

Then in the 165th verse he adds—

"Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them," or literally—"there is in them no stumbling-block."

This I am inclined to understand in the same way in which John, in the 2nd chapter of his 1st Epistle, at verse 10, saith, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him."

That is, by reason of his love for his brother, so far as he is concerned, his brother is without occasion to take offence at him or be uncharitable.

This meaning of the phrase, "there is no stumbling-block in him," appears to me borne out by the words of St. Paul in Heb. xii. 12, 13: "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees. And make straight paths with your feet, lest that which is crooked be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed."

In Luther's German Bible occurs this translation, "make straight paths *with* your feet," instead of "*for* your feet."

The Apostle apparently refers to the custom which is still to be seen in Eastern countries observed by travellers on foot, where the habits are so unvarying.

At this day Hindoos, if having to walk over a field, will, as I am informed, be seen to walk in a long line, one after another—the following ones scrupulously planting their steps in the foot-prints of him who precedes—a custom described by us as 'Indian file.'

In this sense then it seems to me the Apostle Paul supposed that the more eminent Christian should be careful to set a good example before his weaker brethren.

A vacillating example on the part of those in honour for knowledge of God's word will be a source of vacillation and stumbling to feeble souls, who at a distance far behind are toiling after them, and trying to keep God's word. (Gal. ii. 11.)

Hence our Lord, as it seems to me, said in Matt. xviii. 6, 7—

"Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him, that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck; and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come: but woe unto him by whom the offence cometh."

Those leaders who, like the psalmist, under trying circumstances abide in the fear of God's word, out of love for Him, have great peace themselves; and by their decided course strengthen the hearts of sincere but feeble followers, who narrowly observe their behaviour, and appreciate in them that fear of God by obedience to His word, which casteth out the fear of man.

In the 166th verse, the psalmist continues, with reference to the same line of conduct—

"Lord, I have hoped for Thy salvation, and done Thy commandments."

By "salvation" the psalmist here meant final rest with God after this painful life should be ended; wherefore he implies, that he would rather not "accept deliverance" in regard of salvation for the body (Heb. xi. 35), in the hope of a "better resurrection;" than risk "the destruction of soul and body in hell." (Matt. x. 28.) But his protestation that he had done God's com-

mandments is, as Bishop Horne observes, not pleaded as the ground of his hope, but as evidence of the sincerity wherewith he trusted in God's saying concerning righteousness. For that sort of belief therein, which is unaccompanied by obedience to God's word is a dead faith: whereas faith, to be pleasing to God, must work by love; as the psalmist in the 167th verse testifies that his did; saying—

“My soul hath kept Thy testimonies, and loved them exceedingly.”

Adding, in verse 168—

“I have kept Thy precepts and Thy testimonies, for all my ways are before Thee.”

That is, I walk before Thee as Thou badest Abraham to do and to be perfect (Gen. xvii. 1); as David too in Ps. xvi. 8, testified; saying, “I have set the Lord alway before me: He is on my right hand; I shall not be moved.”

Such seems to me to be the manner of life to be maintained by everyone who is “perfect or thoroughly furnished unto every good work:” and the enunciation of this part of a perfect man's walk and conversation forms, as it seems to me, the main subject for consideration in this section.

21.

Me princes' wrath has causelessly assail'd,  
But of Thy word hath my heart greater awe;  
While I, as one that finds great spoil, have hail'd  
With joy Thy saying! Lying, I abhor  
And execrate; but truly love Thy law.  
Seven times a day do I to Thee address  
My praise for all Thy righteous judgments. Great  
The peace which them, that love Thy law, doth bless.  
No stumbling-block for others they create!  
For Thy salvation, O Jehovah, I  
Have hop'd, and Thy commandments done! My soul  
Thy testimonies, which exceedingly  
I love, hath kept. Thy precepts did control  
My heart, as did Thy testimonies too:  
For all my ways are chosen in Thy view.

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VENTY-SECOND SECTION OF PSALM CXIX.—THAU.

ARGUMENT.

An examination of the eight verses composing this twenty-second section in their order will, I trust, prove that the same method is to be traced in its structure as in that of those preceding.

In the 169th verse, where we read—

“Let my cry come near before Thee, O Lord:

Give me understanding according to Thy word,”

it is to be observed, that the meaning of the word “understanding,” explained “according to God’s word,” is to be determined by viewing it in connection with “knowledge” and “wisdom,” as in Prov. ii. 6, and Col. i. 9.

“Knowledge” consists in the mental acquisition of God’s revealed truth.

“Wisdom,” in the employment of it for regulation of the inner man.

“Understanding,” in a perception of the weight and authority belonging to that revealed word.

God alone can impress upon the soul this reverential sense of the claim He hath upon man’s profoundest submission.

This gift, when obtained, would manifestly intensify the earnestness of the psalmist’s cry.

In the 170th verse the psalmist saith—

“Let my supplication come before Thee; deliver me according to Thy word.”

Here “supplication” is to be distinguished from the “cry” in the preceding verse, by observing, that this latter is the lifting up of the voice for the purpose of gaining attention; but the former is entreaty of a special kind; that is, for good things, whether for body or soul. The original term, here translated “word,” is different from that so rendered in the preceding verse; and is that which in former instances throughout this psalm has been, for distinction-sake, uniformly rendered by “saying.”

Already in this psalm has occurred ample evidence of this “saying” being the message which the prophets of God were commissioned to bear concerning justification of a penitent worshipper, by faith in God’s promise concerning Christ; called in verse 123 “the word of Thy righteousness.” Deliverance, according to this “word,” would mean deliverance through God Himself, as stated in verse 154, “pleading” the psalmist’s “cause and redeeming him.”

In the 171st verse the psalmist continues—

"My lips shall utter praise, when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes."

It might surprise some to find one so experienced as the psalmist in the worship of God saying this: but in truth God's people are in this school learners to the end of their pilgrimage.

The "statutes" have been throughout this psalm explained to mean those parts of God's written word in which rules are given for observance by His people in their collective capacity, as a congregation.

That statute more particularly referred to in this place may be taken to be, the way for penitent worshippers unto God, that should be opened through Christ at His coming. (John xiv. 6.)

This, in the psalmist's time, and long after, continued a hidden thing—a mystery—as Peter testifies in 1 Epist. i. 10—12; until the counsel of God on this head was made manifest by Christ's gospel. (Heb. ix. 8—28.)

The psalmist therefore might well pray to be taught of God more and more therein, although "thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

In Isa. lvii. 19 it had been written, "I create the fruit of the lips;" and in Ps. li. 15, "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise."

The psalmist doubtless bore these testimonies in mind when inditing verses 171, 172, knowing that God infuses into a believer, for Christ's sake, upon his asking for it, a measure of the Spirit of Christ (Ps. li. 10), which rises to the lips in thanksgivings, praises, supplications, intercessions—thereby becoming "the fruit of the lips."

In the 172nd verse he adds—

"My tongue" (which is man's "glory," Ps. cxviii. 1,) "shall speak of Thy word; for all Thy commandments are righteousness."

The term for "word" in this verse is the same with that in verse 170, meaning "saying;" and since "the commandments" are to be taken to mean here those of the two tables of duty to God and to our neighbour (Matt. xxii. 36), by which comes the knowledge of sin (Rom. iii. 20; vii. 7), the psalmist's asseveration that they are "righteousness" implies that he was here thankfully commemorating how, by God's "saying," or "the word of His righteousness" (verse 123), He could be just, according to the standard set forth in the Mosaic law; and yet the Justifier of Him who believeth in His promise concerning Christ. (Rom. iii. 26, and Micah vi. 5—8.)

In the next verse—the 173rd—the psalmist saith—

"Let Thine hand help me; for I have chosen Thy precepts."

Here it is to be observed that "the finger," "hand," and "arm" of God denote different degrees of His Spirit's operation.

Also in Ezekiel's book, who was the contemporary, as we assume, of the psalmist, "the hand of God" is more frequently than elsewhere in Scripture used to denote the operation of the Spirit. (See iii. 14.)

"The precepts" have again and again during exposition of this psalm been explained to mean, those portions of His written word which contain maxims for regulation of individuals in their inner life, known only to God and oneself. The psalmist with great ingenuousness pleads his habit of choosing God's precepts, when asking for a measure of His Spirit. For assuredly a believer ought not to expect such renewal, if not doing all in his power at that time "to order his conversation aright." (Ps. l. 23.)

It is instructive to observe the psalmist's protestation unto the Searcher of hearts, that he had a good conscience in this respect. (1 Tim. i. 19; 1 John iii. 19—24.)

In the 174th verse the psalmist saith—

"I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord; and Thy law is my delight."

The joining of "law" in this verse with "salvation" (as explained in verse 155) warrants one in thinking that the psalmist here refers to the new law (Isa. li. 4)—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ—more especially as he had in the preceding verse asked for a measure of the Spirit. Undoubtedly "law" is to be so understood in Ps. xli., where it is predicted that the Christ should say at His coming to redeem Israel—

"I delight to do Thy will, O God;  
Yea, Thy law is within my heart."

The "will" in this instance being the special requirement of Christ to yield Himself a sacrifice; which He rendered by the "law" of the Spirit of love within His heart. (Heb. ix. 14.)

There is a close resemblance between those words of David and these in verse 174—

"Thy law is my delight."

Hence the psalmist's "longing for salvation" was that produced in him by the operation of Christ's Spirit, as described more fully by St. Paul in Rom. viii. 19—28.

In the 175th verse the psalmist adds—

"Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee; and let Thy judgments help me."

The soul, as we have seen in commenting on Ps. lxxvi. 8, 9, is that part of man in which is laid up his moral responsibility. Here is the seat of the will, which by being yielded to the Spirit of Christ, granted in answer to prayer for it, brings the soul health and strength in Christ. (Rom. vi. 13.)

"Judgments" are in this place to be understood as explained in verse 156; where it was shewn that God daily awards us



growth, or otherwise, according to our use or abuse of the means of grace within our reach.

For "He searches the heart and tries the reins, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. xvii. 10, and John viii. 50.)

We therefore understand the psalmist to say in verse 175, that if the Lord would adjudge him increase of grace (Luke xvii. 5) his soul would gain "help."

He then adds, in verse 176—

"I have gone astray like a lost (or perishing) sheep; seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments."

Here again it might seem to us matter of surprise that one so eminent for grace as the psalmist should speak of himself as gone astray, like a perishing sheep.

Let it then be observed, that as children of God grow in grace, and gain increase of understanding (Isa. xi. 3), they mourn the more over the strayings of the heart, which at an earlier time, when less transformed by the renewing of their mind, they left unregarded. (Matt. v. 4; Rom. xii. 2.) It is to be remembered, as Asaph, in Ps. lxxiii. 27, testifies: "Lo! they that are far from Thee shall perish"—a testimony bearing considerable resemblance to this of verse 176.

It is also to be borne in mind how the Lord Jesus, in John xiii. 8, told Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me;" shewing that any sin soever, unrepented of, damns. For into heaven nothing can enter that "defileth or maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.) We are to be "holy, and without blemish." (Eph. v. 27.)

The psalmist, however, while confessing that he is astray, adds that he forgets not his Shepherd's commandments (Ps. xxiii.); wherefore he with a good conscience prays that God would seek him.

He must therefore mean that his straying was such as he could not help falling into through "the plague of his own heart;" (1 Kings viii. 38,) notwithstanding his honest endeavours to keep God's commandments: after which manner St. Paul also saith the like in Rom. vii. 22—25.

How, now, is this confession of the psalmist in his last verse to be reconciled with that at the outset, in the 1st verse?—

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

We are not so to explain this last verse as to prove the psalmist destitute of that "blessedness" spoken of in the first. (Rom. iv. 6—9.)

We are to harmonise the language of either verse in the psalmist's mouth, that from this fountain there may only be shewn to proceed sweet water. (James iii. 11.) This, therefore,

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is done by shewing that the psalmist's continuance undefiled in the way, consisted in his daily faithful application unto God with prayer out of an honest and good heart (Luke viii. 15), for cleansing and renewal with the Spirit of Christ. (Ps. li. 7—12; Job ix. 30.)

These eight verses, so explained, clearly relate to one subject, and consequently have that unity of thought, characterizing each of the other sections separately, and as a whole.

What, then, appears to be the aim of the psalmist in this section? It is, I would say, to shew forth the need which the ripest and most matured believer has to call upon God with confession, "Behold Thou art wroth, for we have sinned," as in Isa. lxxiv. 5—8; Dan. ix. 7—9.

In no other way than this would God have us Christians to hope for justification before Him, by taking the imputed righteousness of Christ for our wedding garment, and using the infused righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 9, and v. 21; and Isa. xxvi. 12) in regard of His quickening Spirit (as also now, of His sacrificial flesh and blood by way of being the fitting vessel for His Spirit) for our continuance "undefiled in the way, walking in the law of the Lord." (Rom. viii. 1; 1 John iii. 19—24.)

### 22.

'Fore Thee, Jehovah, let my cry come near!  
According to Thy word cause me to have  
Quick understanding. Oh! let there appear  
'Fore Thee my supplication! me reprice  
According to Thy saying! me vouchsafe  
To teach Thy statutes; so 'll my lips express  
Thy praise—my tongue shall of Thy saying tell,  
For Thy commandments all are righteousness.  
Let Thine hand help me; for I love to dwell  
Upon Thy precepts; I've, Jehovah, yearn'd  
For Thy salvation! Thy law's my delight.  
Let my soul live, which shall Thy praise have learn'd.  
And let Thy judgments help me! In Thine eyes  
I'm as a stray sheep; bring me back to Thee,  
Who Thy commandments keep in memory.

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## PSALM CXX.

## TITLE.

## A Song of ascents.

In the absence of any agreement among Commentators upon the meaning of *הַשִּׁיר הַעֲלֹהִי*—rendered by the Septuagint *ὠδαι τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν*—may it be permitted me to suggest an explanation of my own?

Rogers observes that “the frequent occurrence of *שׁ* for *אֲשׁר* and of Chaldee words and terminations in these fifteen psalms entitled “Songs of Ascent,” tends to confirm the opinion, that they were either composed, or at least altered and adapted to the circumstances of the times, at a period long subsequent to the reign of David. The particle *שׁ* does not once occur in the first 121 psalms, whereas in the fifteen songs of degrees it is used ten times.”

Though the title *לַדָּוִד* of Ps. cxxiv., and that of *לְשִׁלְמֹה* Ps. cxxvii, testify to their having been written by David, or by David and Solomon, will it be allowed me here to assume, that they who used them during the captivity in Babylon, had a special reason for designating the psalms at that time “Songs of ascension?”

We know that it was the custom with David and others in Israel to occasionally pray, looking upward, (see Ps. v. 3) as well as towards God's holy temple. Indeed our first parents upon their expulsion from Paradise appear to have turned toward the visible token of the Divine presence, where were the Cherubim. (For in Gen. ii. 8 it appears that the four quarters of the heavens derive their names in Hebrew from the fact of the worshipper's face having been at that day turned to the East; whereupon the south would be on his right hand, the west at his back, and the north on his left—these being the names in Hebrew for the four quarters.)

But, when God caused the visible tokens of His presence on earth in the days of Moses to be manifested on the extended wings of the cherubim over the mercy-seat or lid of the ark in the holy of holies, recollection of the former custom inclined Israelites to turn thitherward for the worship of God.

It is clear from the psalm already cited, as also from 1 Kings viii. 38, that this custom received the Divine sanction; and from Daniel vi. 10 it is clear, that he observed this practice when neither Jerusalem nor the temple were any longer standing.

Now, let me ask, may it not have been of importance, seeing that the temple and city were destroyed, to shew the Jewish captives in Babylon that though God had, by permitting this desolation, cast them out from His visible presence on earth ceremonially, He did not thereby intend it to be concluded that He had utterly cast them away? Would there not here be a sufficient reason for the inspired authors or users of these fifteen psalms entitling them "Songs of Ascension," in order to furnish their fellow-captives with authoritative encouragement in calling upon God in heaven? Would it not also serve for a distinction between them—the worshippers of the only true God—and the idolaters round about them, to look upward and worship; as though saying in the language of Ps. cxv. 3, "Our God is in heaven, He hath done whatsoever pleased Him.

"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands?"

May not also the ancient versicles in the Apostolic Church—

"Lift up your hearts;

We lift them up unto the Lord"—

throw light upon this disputed title שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלִיָּה?

Are not these versicles our "song of ascensions"? Not only do spiritually-minded worshippers need to stir up the gift that is in them by repeating to themselves the words "Lift up your hearts" by way of a *πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων* (Heb. xi. 1); but because, so surely as the true worshipper is to be distinguished from the Pantheist (whose plausible plea is that God is in everything) by worshipping a Personal God, in heaven; so also is the scriptural worshipper of the Lord Jesus in this age to be distinguished from the superstitious one (who upon the plausible plea of Christ's spiritual manhood being in the believer, or in the sacramental elements, would worship His substance therein) by lifting up the heart to Him in heaven at God's right hand, and worshipping Him Personally there.

For so taught the Apostle Paul in Col. iii. 1.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

Christ as a Man is only Personally present in one place at a time; that is, at the right hand of God: thither scriptural worshippers are to lift up their hearts to worship Him: thus are they to "hold the Head." (Ephes. iv. 15.)

By His Almighty power He—the glorified Head—is as able to communicate His succour to us on earth—His mystical members—as though He were personally hovering unseen beside the consecrated elements on His Table.

In the same way, then, that the versicles—

"Lift up your hearts;

We lift them up unto the Lord"—

may be termed *שיר המעלות* for us Christians, it is here asked you to assume that the inspired authors of these fifteen psalms, in captivity, authoritatively encouraged their countrymen, notwithstanding the destruction of their city and temple, to be persuaded that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob would hear them from whatever place on the earth, in their captivity because of their national sins, they might truly penitently, charitably, turn unto Him in heaven. (Deut. iv. 25—31; Isa. xxx. 19; agreeably wherewith see 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.)

It was observed, in commenting on the first and second psalms, that David made the two a title to his book, to indicate its two-fold subject—Christ and the people of Christ. What, then, if the first psalm of this last book—the hundred and seventh—should have been intended to set forth or suitably introduce its chief contents or leading subject?

We know that the hundred and seventh, by occasion of the return of the Jews out of Babylon, describes as well the manner of their eventual return from the four quarters of the earth at the time appointed; as also their condition meanwhile in their places of sojourn, or, it may be, at their temporary returns to their own land, until that day of redemption.

May not then these fifteen psalms, entitled “songs of ascension,” have been specially intended for the use of Israelites under these circumstances, whether in captivity or in their own land, until that promised rest therein shall have been attained in their Messiah’s own time and way? (1 Tim. vi. 15.)

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### ARGUMENT.

In the first verse of this psalm the devout souls of the Israelitish people are plainly supposed to speak as one man unto the Lord God of their fathers, when in a state of distress, such as lay heavily on the Jewish portion of their nation during the captivity in Babylon; and again has so done ever since their Divinely-appointed dispersion, consequent on their national rejection of the Gospel which the Lord Jesus commanded His Apostles to preach to them first after His Ascension. (Luke xxiv. 37; Acts i. 8; with 1 Thess. ii. 14—16.)

What occasioned the distress complained of in the first verse is not intimated; nor is it of importance that it should be: for the important point is, that whatever it be, we ought to cry unto the Lord under it, and not have recourse unto vain things which cannot profit. (1 Sam. xii. 21; Jer. ii. 8.)

For the Lord Jesus is recorded in Matt. xi. 28 to have said, “Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;” where it is to be observed that, no matter whence the burden may have arisen, possibly from your own misconduct,

yet if you penitently and charitably turn unto Jesus under it, He will fulfil to you His promise.

Applying then this rule to the Israelites, for whose use this psalm was written, we are to observe that they are represented as knowing that He heard them, so soon as they cried to Him.

But those alone in Israel under their protracted captivity would have the consoling persuasion of being heard, while their outward affliction was unremoved, who being meek and poor in spirit, would value the grace of God poured into their souls—of the effects of which they would be conscious—so as to speak that which they knew, in saying, “I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me.”

When we come to the second verse, the cause of distress to these mourning Israelites may with much probability be conjectured. “Lying lips and a deceitful tongue” employed against one would be distressing to those Israelites in any matter, and especially in regard of their religion: but that would be the very reason for their enemies rather resorting to it.

This is to be seen in the case of Daniel, where the princes of Media and Persia, when plotting against him (Dan. vi. 5), said, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”

Just as Daniel’s difference in religion from the heathen round about, and from the unconverted among his own countrymen, was the readiest way of attacking him, and bringing him to worldly ruin (because he, in that respect more than any other, stood alone, with but a few poor and despised ones like himself); so have the enemies of the true Israelites at all times found to be the case, and shaped their attacks accordingly. We may therefore here conjecture, that the main cause of distress mentioned in the first verse was through “lying lips and a deceitful tongue” employed against one in the matter of worshipping and calling upon God.

We know wherein consisted the lying and deceitful character of the attack made by the princes of Media and Persia on Daniel before Darius; and the like has characterised the attacks made ever since by enemies to them that call upon God in sincerity.

We have an instance of this in Acts xiii. 10, where Elymas, the sorcerer, having withstood Paul in Cyprus, had his behaviour, we may be sure deservedly, stigmatised in the following terms: “Oh, full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt not thou cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”

Also in Eph. iv. 14 the same Apostle, writing to a church dwelling among citizens renowned for their proficiency in witchcraft (Acts xix. 19), speaks of believers in Jesus being “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

It is plain, therefore, that in this sense the language of these two verses would admit of being used by devout Israelites, from that day of the captivity in Babylon, when it was probably written, to this present one.

In the 3rd verse it is asked—

“What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?”

And the answer is—

“Sharp arrows of the Mighty”—that is, of the Mighty One of Israel—“with coals of juniper”—that is, with the hottest bolts; because of juniper and kindred woods having a special capability of retaining an intense degree of heat.

This verse so explained, as referring to the arrows of the Almighty, to Whom this suffering Israelite leaves the avenging of him, agrees with what is said on the same subject in the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 42), where God saith, “I will make My arrows drunk with blood;” and with the seventh psalm, where we read at verse 13, “He ordaineth His arrows against the persecutors;” also in Ps. xviii. 14.

The next verse—the fifth—is one which has occasioned most perplexity; its words are—

“Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!”

Mesech is, with general consent, taken to mean the Muscovites or Russians: Kedar, the Arabians.

Now, though Israelites have had, and still have, much to do with Arabians, they never yet have with Russians or Muscovites.

It has been therefore supposed by commentators that, like as we English have popularly used the name Turk and Tartar for whatever man might do that was ferocious; so in the psalmist’s day, Mesech or Scythian, was used among the Persians, (by whom indeed Cyrus, the liberator of the Jews out of Babylon, was slain in battle.)

But there is an incongruity in taking the name Mesech in the former clause of this verse figuratively (by supposing it spoken of one’s own countrymen or others, that, as we would say, behave *like* Turks or Tartars), while taking Kedar—the Arabian—in the latter clause, literally.

Wherefore, it seems to me more consistent to suppose, agreeably with De Burgh, that the psalmist prophetically refers to a time yet future—at the close of the long captivity of Israel—when their last enemies, that are to be destroyed by thunderbolts from the presence of the returning Lord, will be—on the one hand, the nations now called Christian, though then in reality Anti-Christian, under the headship of Russia; and, on the other, the Mahomedan powers, characterised by Kedar or Arabia.

So interpreted, the psalm receives throughout a consistent application, and is adapted for the use of a devout Israelite from

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the day in which it was written to the time of the Lord's return from heaven.

For in this mode of interpretation the application of the last two verses is obvious : where it is said—

“ My soul hath long dwelt with him”—one being here put for a class (Isa. xxxiii. 24)—“ that hateth peace.

“ I am for peace ; but when I speak, they are for war—” ;

it being the uniform practice of “ those that pervert the right ways of the Lord ” to carry their aims by violence ; crushing, if possible, in the outset every attempt at expostulation.

In this sense we, that hold the truth of Christ according to His written word, can, as being now of the only remnant of the true Israelites, take up every word of this psalm, in our distress produced by lying lips and a deceitful tongue of an Antichristian Confederacy—whether by superstitious use of traditions of men on the one side, or by infidelity on the other—in other words—Mesech or Kedar.

It is not permitted the meek followers of the Lamb to resort to war in defence of their most holy faith ; which makes those that pervert the right ways of the Lord so ready to threaten war, as the bar to that peace for which they that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity earnestly contend—peace with God through His blood-shedding once for all, and pleaded by Himself in heaven above, without man's works or deservings being in any wise mixed up therewith for justification before God. So long as the powers given us in the course of God's providence by the constitutional government under which we live remain to us, we may use them in defence of “ peace,” as we seek it, and “ speak ” of it ; but if those powers be wrested from us, or overborne, it only remains for us to await our Lord's return ; as St. James intimates in verse 6, when saying, “ Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you.”

1.

Lo ! to Jehovah in my sore distress

I cried, Who unto me inclin'd His ear !

From fraud and lies my soul, Jehovah, snatch !

What scourge, what death can meet thy wickedness,

False tongue ? Against thee coals of juniper

And keen shafts shall the Mighty One despatch.

2.

Woe, woe is me, that I in Mesech dwell—

That in the tents of Kedar I abide !

Long hath my soul with enemies to peace



Convers'd—that peace, whereof I love to tell!  
 Speak I of peace? straight on the contr'ry side  
 Are they; and threaten fiercely, till I cease.

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## PSALM CXXI.

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### TITLE.

A Song for Ascents.

Here is a slight variation from the titles of the other songs of a similar character—those being songs “of ascents”—this “for ascents.” The variation affects not the sense in which it was, in treating of the former psalm, proposed that this ascension should be understood.

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### ARGUMENT.

This psalm apparently admits of being most advantageously distinguished into three parts. In the first two verses the worshipper gives utterance to his service of faith.

In the next two occurs an oracular voice from the breast, as it seems to me, of the prophet to whom the worshipper had repaired to enquire of the Lord, (Ezek. xiv. 1—7,) denoting God's acceptance of this worshipper.

In the remaining verses the prophet expatiates in the worshipper's hearing on the impressive purport of that oracular response.

Sundry expressions in this short psalm may be advantageously treated of by themselves, with a view to the elucidation of its import.

When the worshipper saith—

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help,”

it is to be observed, that the circumstance of Sion (whither the faithful should turn to worship God after removal of the ark there,) being seated on a hill and surrounded by hills, soon came to furnish a metaphorical designation of the holy place of God's special manifestation of Himself in heaven; where are the realities of which the temple on Mount Moriah furnished a pattern. (Heb. viii. 5; 1 Chron. xxii.)

By comparison of the 3rd with the 5th verse of Psalm v. it may be gathered that enlightened worshippers, while turning their faces towards the mercy-seat (which was the lid of the ark,) looked up thence to the Most High in heaven itself, as might Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 13,) from the foot to the top of the ladder shewn him in his dream.

There is no mention in this psalm of any local association; so that, for anything we know to the contrary, it might have been composed during the captivity in Babylon, and probably was so.

On this supposition it might describe the acceptableness of a worshipper coming to the prophet there to inquire of the Lord, in the enlightened frame of mind expressed in the first two verses.

In the latter of these, where the worshipper saith—

“My help cometh of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.”

It may be observed, that regard to God's works in nature is the readiest way a worshipper can find of contending against the dulness of his natural understanding and proneness of his affections earthward.

This use of God's works in nature is repeatedly met with in holy Scripture. (See Isa. lv. 10, 11.)

Thus, in the Lord's prayer, we are taught to think, how greatly God is exalted as our Father above our earthly parents, by saying that He is in heaven.

For in Isa. lv. 9, that prophet was inspired to write on God's behalf, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” But God's works in creation are unable to furnish evidence of those attributes of God, which it most concerns fallen man to be persuaded of.

There is no intimation given in the realm of nature that God will forgive: rather the contrary, for if one in youth racks out his constitution, he never receives a new one; if a limb be amputated, no new one grows in its place.

Although, therefore, a worshipper, by looking for help to Him that made heaven and earth, may say with the leper in Matt. viii. 2, nothing that is worthy to be done by Thee is impossible with Thee—if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean—the works in nature in vain may be consulted for indications of His willingness to do this.

Here it is then, that God's revealed word (the need whereof arose from man's fall,) supplies the desired testimony concerning God's willingness to heal them that diligently seek Him in the prescribed way; even as Jesus shewed to that leper, by stretching forth his hand and saying, “I will, be thou clean! and immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”

Here, therefore, is to be seen the inestimable preciousness of that timely oracular response to the pious worshipper, found in

the 2nd and 3rd verses, the latter of which is cumulative in its bearing upon the former ; for whereas in the former it is testified by the Spirit through the prophet's mouth—

“He will not suffer thy foot to be moved ; He that keepeth thee will not slumber :”—

In the latter, which addeth—

“Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”

The reason is given for that gracious assurance in the former verse, of God's care for the worshipper ; namely, because of his being of the Israel of God.

For the use here made of the name “Israel” shews that it denotes the Lord's “hidden ones.” (Ezek. xiii. 9, Ps. lxxxviii. 3, cviii. 6, cxi. 1, and cxii. 2.)

Whereon St. Paul in Rom. ix. 6, saith, “They are not all Israel, that are of Israel, neither, because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children ;” that is, they may be of Israel, as being descended from Abraham in the course of nature, and enrolled in the family of Israel by sacramental title of circumcision in the flesh, yet not be “of Israel” by the effect or power of the word of God's promise (verse 6 of Rom. ix. compared with 1 Cor. iv. 20,) which cometh from the Holy Ghost into one's heart through faith, such as had Abraham. (Rom. iv. 12.)

For the worshippers spoken of in this psalm needed to have been begotten of God in order to be “of Israel” in this emphatic sense. (See John viii. 34—44, compared with 1 Sam. x. 12.)

The introduction of this verse with the exclamation Behold ! is intended to arrest attention, and doubtless fixed the pious worshipper's, in the instance before us, on the true ground of the gracious acceptance accorded to him in the former verse.

So understood, “the foot” that the Lord would not suffer to be moved, is not that of the body alone but of the soul too ; concerning which we find it written in Ps. xxvi. 12, “My foot standeth in an even place,” but more clearly in Ps. lxi. 8, 9,

“O bless our God ye people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard :

“Who holdeth our soul in life ; and suffereth not our feet to be moved.”

That this meaning is included here in mention of “the foot” is to be further concluded from consideration of what is said about the Lord never slumbering in His watchful care over one of His Israel.

One of the earliest revelations in Scripture concerning God's watchfulness for the comfort of fallen man, and for help of him through life as well as in death, is the reference to the Lord's eye.

Laban, who was not over-scrupulous about what he himself did, if having the opportunity; yet when afraid of what Jacob, whom he found to have the favour of God, might do against him in requital for his misdeeds, being desirous of binding him and his descendants to observance of the treaty he had concluded, (Gen. xxxi. 49,) erected a mound, and told Jacob its name should be Mizpah, to denote his dependence on the Lord's eye to restrain Jacob and his descendants from crossing that boundary hostilely against him or his descendants.

Again in Ps. xxxi. David was instructed by God Himself to record the promise,

"I will guide thee with Mine eye;"

showing of what use to the believer is this remembrance of the Lord's unslumbering observance of him, to restrain him from a willing sin even in thought, when every other restraint were inoperative.

And again in 2 Chron. xvi. 9, Hanani rebuked Asa for failing to be persuaded that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him;" that is, undivided in aim. (James iv. 8, and Matt. vi. 22—24.)

It is hence clear, that mention of the Lord's unslumbering eye not suffering the foot to be moved, means much more His upholding of the accepted worshipper's perfect heart towards Him, than of such a worshipper's procedure alone on any lawful enterprise with the foot of his body.

In the verses which follow, the prophet (as it has been above assumed,) admonishes the worshipper of the Divine Majesty appertaining to the Utterer of that oracular response. Jehovah, Whom thou faithfully holdest to be one with Elohim—maker of heaven and earth—Israel's covenant God—(Exod. iii. 14, and vi. 3,) is thy Keeper; as He Himself testifies in what He hath spoken by me!

How much is implied in this condescension on the Lord's part to call Himself His Israel's Keeper!

The first use of this word occurs as early as in Gen. iv. 2, where it appears to have come into use because of Abel having called himself, or been called by Adam, "a keeper of sheep." Cain's disdainful use of this word indicates how he repudiated the idea, for his own part, of being tied to the care of a flock of sheep.

Rather than be this, he would be the terror of the wild beast. Now Jehovah does not disdain as irksome the office of keeper of Israel collectively and individually.

Yet how far more wayward and perverse is that flock of which the Lord thus assumes the care, than Abel's.

Yet He is not such a Keeper as shall make Him rather a terror to the straying ones; (Luke xvi. 1—7,) far otherwise: He

is such an One, as affords refuge for the frail and feeble-minded ; which is implied in the prophet's exposition on this point ; by saying, Jehovah is a shadow too (as "of a great rock in a weary land !" Isa. xxxii. 2,) at thy right hand ; that is, for thy prompt and effectual help. Compare herewith Ps. cix. 6.

The beneficent nature of this shadow is denoted by the shelter it is declared to give ; since in that hot country the stroke of the sun or of the moon is much more systematically to be provided against, than in our more temperate climate. But this refers only to protection of bodily or physical life. Accordingly, in the 7th verse the prophet testifies, that the oracular response above uttered pledges the Lord to protection of the single-hearted believer from all evil, whether in the sense of affliction or of sin ; so that it shall not be too much for one, and move one's foot from its steadfastness ; yea, it implies, that He shall preserve thy soul—a testimony amply vindicating the comments above made on the oracular words,

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved."

For the life of the soul is of a higher order than that of the body, and is only to be upheld through faith in the sole-sufficiency of the Lord, to be the Keeper of Israel, even to the extent of defending that life by His sacrificial death and resurrection. (John x. 11, and Heb. xii. 24, and Ps. xci.)

When in the 8th verse the inspired prophet speaks of the oracular voice conveying to that pious worshipper a pledge of Jehovah's "preservation of him in going out and coming in, (a phrase for every use of his foot, 2 Chron. i. 10,) from this time forth for evermore ;" such a testimony imported, that the Lord's care would continue long after the dissolution of our soul and body ; yea, would be as lasting as the existence of Jehovah Himself, after the worshipper's admission into His own sabbatical rest. (Heb. iv. 9.)

Now when a worshipper among us draws near with such words as those in the first two verses of this psalm—or, as St. Paul more explicitly directs us on this head to do in Col. iii. 1—3—it is not to be assumed, as many believers do, that this includes the whole of their duty in any direction of the foot, which the Lord shall not suffer to be moved. It is always in these instances to be understood, that the worshipper subordinately uses those faculties for procurement of the desired benefit, wherewith the Lord hath endued him.

They are to be used by one, who seeks help from the Maker of heaven and earth ; just as much as they are by the ungodly, who depend on their own right hand and wit for what they aim at.

Except pious worshippers observe this preliminary requisite, they may not expect to obtain their desire, how lawful soever in itself.

Hence the popular saying, "God helps those who help themselves;" or, the fable of Hercules and the Carter in *Æsop*.

See the example of Jacob in Gen. xxxii. who, when doubting whether his brother Esau's advance toward him might not be hostile, made every arrangement that prudence could suggest for the safety of part at least of his possessions, as also of his family; and then confronted the danger of the personal rencontre in the spirit of this worshipper, who said, "My help cometh from the Lord Who made heaven and earth." In this way pious parents, who ask the Lord to turn their children's hearts toward Him, must not be slack in the training of them through childhood and youth by enforcement of prudential restraints of their feet, as well as instruction of their minds; whereupon they may then hope, that their children, when old, will not depart from it. (Prov. xxii. 6.)

Again, when every precaution may have been taken for procurement of a lawful object, and we trust in the Lord as above directed for the issue, we are not to think there is reason for our foot being moved, if we gain not in this life what we might lawfully desire.

When Peter, in Acts xii. was put in prison by Herod, and prayer was made by the Church for him, and he was delivered, this issue enabled those worshippers in a sense intelligible to the ungodly, as well as the godly, to see the Lord would not suffer their foot to be moved.

But afterwards, when the Lord's prediction, in John xxiii. 18, concerning the manner of Peter's death came true, had the Church any cause to think that, because of his crucifixion, God had suffered their foot to be moved? No! the Lord then delivered him fully, finally "from all evil," yea, "preserved his soul"—translating him from a scene of tribulation and trial to the haven of incorruptible, undefiled, unfading bliss!

This psalm so explained seems to fit it in an especial manner for solace of a believer in his going down to the grave.

How consolatory at such a crisis is it for him to look up with an undivided heart unto Jesus, at God's right hand, and see in Him his Helper—his Keeper—through an eventful life, (Gen. xlviii. 14—16, Isa. xl. 11, Jude ver. 24,) Who changes not, though the believer must, (Job xiv. 14, 1 Cor. xv. 51,)—Who therefore will never leave one nor forsake one, (Josh. i. 5,) so that "we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me," Heb. xiii. 6, with which compare Rom. ix. 31—39.

With what comfort may such a believer persuade himself, that he is not about to take a step in the dark, "at going out" of the body by dissolution, without knowing whither he is going, or who shall receive him (Luke xvi. 9); but say, "I know Whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have com-

mitted unto Him against that day of His return." (2 Tim. i. 12, with which compare 1 Pet. iv. 19.)

In this hope may we regard the Lord at our very death as "preserving the soul's foot at going out" of the body "and coming into" the Divine presence, "from that time forth for evermore!"

1.

Unto the hills, whence forth  
Issues my help, I'll lift mine eyes!  
Jehovah, Who made heav'n and earth,  
My help alone supplies!

2.

Thy foot from being mov'd  
He'll guard, and, ever wakeful, keep!  
Lo! He, Who Israel hath lov'd,  
Nor slumber knows nor sleep!

3.

Jehovah doth thee keep—  
Jehovah on thy right hand shade!  
Lest sun or moon with inj'ry deep  
Strike thy unshelter'd head!

4.

Jehovah 'll off thee ward  
All evil! He'll thy soul restore!  
Thy going out and in He'll guard  
Now and for evermore!

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## PSALM CXXII.

## TITLE.

A Song of ascension for David.

Although the use of the prefix  $\text{ש}$  in verse 3 for  $\text{שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה}$  and to the first words of verse 4 does not of itself prove that this psalm was composed after the captivity in Babylon, inasmuch as this prefix is to be found in Judg. chap. v. 7, vi. 17, vii. 12, viii. 26; yet when viewed in connection with the expression in verse 5, "There are the thrones of the house of David," it seems to me preferable to reckon it of that date: since David himself could hardly be supposed to have referred in the terms of verse 5 to his own thrones. Accordingly to me it would be preferable to take the words in the title  $\text{לְיְהוָה}$  as intended for Messiah under that name; denoting that regard is especially to be had to Messiah in meditating on it, or using it. It is to be observed that the Septuagint doctors sometimes translate  $\text{לְיְהוָה}$  in the title of a psalm by  $\text{τοῦ}$ , as in Ps. cxxxviii, at others by  $\text{τοῦ}$ , as in Ps. cxlv. agreeably with what has been already said in commenting on the title of Ps. lxxii.

## ARGUMENT.

The psalmist appears to me to have in this psalm held up to his reader's view reverence for the Jerusalem that is above, after the manner it had been appointed to be cherished by each individual in Israel towards the place where the Lord had put His Name, and bade Israelites gather there three times a year from every part of the land of Israel to worship Him; as also had appointed that His worship should be daily offered up. (Deut. xii. 10, 11.)

As the time comes yearly round for keeping the Passover or the Feast of Weeks, or that of Tabernacles, every Israelite ought to make the language of this psalm his own; saying with fervour—

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

In the next three verses is added notifications of things in Jerusalem to be reverently thought of:—

"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.



"Whither the tribes go up—the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord.

"For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David."

The Jerusalem here spoken of is not that of stone and timber, but of the citizens whom the Lord makes to be of one mind in His house (Heb. xii. 22, and xi. 10), whereto the tribes are represented as moved by the same Spirit to come up from all parts of the Lord's land with like mind unto the ark of the testimony (Numb. i. 50, Rev. xv. 5); whither Israelites were wont to turn their face in prayer, in acknowledgment of the visible token of the Lord's presence above its mercy-seat. (Ps. v. 7.)

But in order to discourage any conception of a similitude of God in the mind the worshippers are here said to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord. See Exod. xx. 24; Deut. iv. 15.

By "the thrones of judgment there set," the throne of Him, by Whom kings reign and princes decree justice, is undoubtedly to be primarily understood. (Prov. viii. 15.) For the ministers of the Lord were by law appointed to be the judges (Deut. xvii. 8—10); though it might be the prerogative of the king to select priests for that office. (2 Sam. xv. 3, 4.) This office of judging was by covenant sealed to David (see Ps. ix. 4—7, Isa. lv. 3); to certify that the Divine Judge should be of David's line. (Ps. l. 1—6.)

In the next four verses all devout Israelites are taught that they should remember Jerusalem in their prayers, and be persuaded of the Divine favour towards them on that account: that they ought to cherish every good wish for the city of God on earth, as well for their brethren's sake, as for that of God's house in its midst.

It is mournful to think how few comparatively of the Israelites appear to have at any one time cordially embraced this strain of thought and standard of devotedness to the glory of the God of Israel.

Had they done as required, the history of that city, and of their condition nationally in connection with it, would have been far different from what the Scripture shews it to have been.

When the Son of David in fulness of time came to His city—its King and Judge—(Micah v. 1, 2) He with tears deplored His nation's inacquaintance with the things that belong to the peace of Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41, 42); which was clearly owing to the priests—the ministers of the Lord—having neglected to teach their countrymen the right ways of the Lord concerning a sinner's attainment of justification before Him (see Ps. xiv.): so that the nation in general despised the hope of righteousness that is by faith in the merits of the Messiah; and went about to establish their own righteousness. (Rom. x. 3; Micah vi. 5—8; Isa. xlv. 22—25.)

Yet God's covenant with Abraham and David is without possibility of change: consequently the standard of devout aspirations for Jerusalem's prosperity, here inculcated, is not destined to be stultified. According to Ps. xli. 18, "God will do good in His good pleasure unto Zion—He will build the walls of Jerusalem."

As also He testified by Isaiah, chap. i. 26—

"He will restore her judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning: afterward she shall be called 'the city of righteousness, the faithful city;' Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness."

Hence, although the citizens of the Jerusalem in our Lord's time, and their nation generally, by rejection of the things belonging to her peace brought upon themselves that captivity in which they yet remain, still it is the duty of the remnant of the true Israelites to take this psalm as cordially as ever for a standard of devout aspirations concerning the Lord's city, Jerusalem; even as in Isa. lxii. 6, we read how God said by that prophet—

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night: Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Now "the only remnant of the true Israelites" are they, who by believing in Jesus (Whom the Apostles taken by Him from among the Jews, proclaimed to be the Christ,) are taught "the things that belong to the peace of Jerusalem." They are instructed to see how to "hold the Head, from which the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephes. iv. 15, 16.)

In this way they see how they are "come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem," because of their covenant Head—God manifest in the flesh—having ascended up thither, where is "the testimony of Israel," to whom we should turn to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

Where also are the thrones of judgment, the thrones of God's beloved.

Hence, to use the language of St. Paul, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, all the remnant of the true Israelites, at any one time alive on the earth, "have their municipal directory," during this age of the Church, "in heaven: from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour." (Philip. iii. 20; 2 Thess. i. 3—10.)

The psalm before us therefore shews what devout reverence we ought to cherish for the Church that is founded on the Apostles and Prophets—"Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." (Ephes. ii. 20.) How glad we ought to be to gather

together on the Lord's day in the congregation to which we belong, "unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord"—how careful we ought to be of her Liturgy—Creeds—and Articles of Faith—how fervently we ought to pray for her peace, out of regard for the children that are to come after us, to whom we would fain transmit unimpaired the forms of sound words and privileges of public worship with the direct support of the State, if God shall permit.

With such habitual aspirations for God's blessing on that reformed branch of the Apostolic Church in which we of the Church of England worship God—the indications of God's purpose to call us hence, will, by God's help, be but the fulfilment of our desires, like Abraham's for that better country (Heb. xi. 16) where our Saviour is, in Whose presence is the fulness of joy—and at Whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

1.

How gladly heard I some unto me saying,  
Before Jehovah's altar let us wait.  
Our eager feet shall bear us lowly praying,  
Jerusalem, within thy hallow'd gate.

2.

Like to a city in itself compacted  
Jerusalem is builded ; whither throng  
The tribes—the tribes of Jah—with eyes directed  
Towards the ark, when they their praise prolong.

3.

For to the glory there of God's Anointed,<sup>1</sup>  
The thrones of judgment are set up on high—  
Thrones by a covenant Divine appointed  
To be in David's house eternally.<sup>2</sup>

4.

For peace unto Jerusalem entreat ye !  
Prosperity, to them that love her, be !  
In peace, O citizens, within her meet ye,  
Share in her palaces prosperity !

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 5. Matth. xix. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Zech. xii. 7 ; Jer. xxxiii. 15—26.

5.

Because of my companions and my brethren,  
 Will I now say, within thee be there peace !  
 Because of our Jehovah's house for ever in  
 Thy weal shall my heart's interest increase.

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PSALM CXXIII.

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TITLE.

A Song of ascension.

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ARGUMENT.

The lifting up of the eyes by a worshipper unto God, as dwelling in heaven, serves to limit the worship of Him to His Person. He is in every created thing, for its maintenance; yet the worship of Him in any such thing, as some speculative heathens have insisted on doing, directly leads to Pantheism. Although therefore God be everywhere, yet by His authoritative appropriation of Heaven for the special manifestation of His Presence, He has laid on His people the obligation of lifting up the eye of their souls to worship Him Personally there. The only foundation for acceptable worship of God is a Divine Command—for that only which is in obedience to a Divine Command is “of faith.” All else is “will worship.” (Col. ii. 18.) By faith therefore, (without which it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6), true worshippers, as distinguished from Pantheists, say in the language of the first verse of this psalm :

“Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens !”

When we find the constancy, wherewith we ought to look up, compared in the next verse with that wherewith servants in the psalmist's day “looked to the hand of the master or mistress,” it is needful, in order to appreciate the force of this similitude, to consider the very different condition of the servants in a great

household in Eastern lands at that day, from what their class are seen to fill in this land at the present time.

The servants of a great household among us are placed in apartments of their own, and summoned to their master's or mistress's presence by the ringing of a bell: but in the East, in the psalmist's day, the attendants usually remained in the presence of their master or mistress at the further end of the same chamber or apartment. And as there were no bells, and owing to the heat of the weather it might be fatiguing to call them, they were expected to notice the waving of the master's or mistress's hand.

If the servants of a household were attentive they would at once notice when the master's hand beckoned them to come; or by being waved away from them denoted their wish for parties to be removed. It has also in modern times been related by travellers that while the trial of some among their companions, that had been captured by the followers of a chief, was going on before him, he by a mere motion of his hand has indicated to his servants his will that they be carried forth and executed.

In the days of Ahasuerus, when Esther hoped to save her countrymen from massacre by appearing before the king unsummoned, we are told that her preservation from death depended on the king's extending towards her his hand bearing the golden sceptre. Had he not done this, his attendants, who were observant of his hand, for lack of that sign, would have presently led her forth to prison.

Here is an instance of the custom among servants in the East, of learning their master's will by close attention to his hand. See also 2 Sam. xii. 19—21.

An undoubted relic of the same custom is to be recognised in that cruel practice of the Romans for five centuries of our era in their gladiatorial contests: where couples of natives from our island, or from Germany or Gaul, armed in a particular way, were made to engage in the Amphitheatre in deadly combat for the entertainment of their Roman masters. Whereupon, so soon as one combatant being wounded gave up the contest, both looked to the hand of the spectators to see whether they kept the thumb depressed in token that the worsted one should be spared, or raised the thumb erect in token that he should be despatched.

What attention on the part of slaves to the hand of an imperious master was there here!

It was in this manner the psalmist meant that he and his fellow-worshippers would for life or death of the body wait with the eyes of their soul lifted up to God in heaven, looking for His hand.

This would mean token of His Personal interposition by His Spirit in their behalf.

That interposition was very anciently in Scripture figuratively described under the name of "the hand of the Lord."

In Exod. xvii. 16, occurs the first use of it; (possibly shewing how the Israelites, as slaves, had been compelled when in Egypt to watch the hand of their heathen masters.) "The hand that is upon the throne," we read according to the margin, "will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

In Ezekiel, the contemporary of Daniel, and fellow-captive in Babylon, at the time, as it is supposed, of this psalm having been written, mention is frequently made of the Spirit of the Lord under the name of "the Hand." (See Ezek. viii. 3. See too Dan. v. 5.)

To wait then with the eye of the soul on Him that dwelleth in the heavens for manifestations of His hand implied very constant heed to Him, and dependence on Him as the Personal Director of all things in heaven and earth; "Whose hand none can stay, nor say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. ix. 35.)

To wait upon Him implied, on the psalmist's part, refrainment from avenging of himself: and waiting upon Him for His mercy implied, that the sufferer arraigned not the justice of God in permitting him to be afflicted; but rather committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously: saying with Jeremiah in Lamentations iii. 39—"Wherefore doth a living man complain? a man, for the punishment of his sins?"

Seeing that our lives are forfeited, we receive less than our iniquities deserve, while they are spared to us. The psalmist further intimated that he looked to God to rescue him by His over-ruling hand from those, that in the injuriousness of ease in their sins, or pride on account of fancied merit, filled him with a painful sense of their contempt.

Now there are three ways more especially mentioned in the psalmist's day wherein God's hand was seen to the unspeakable joy of His servants that waited on Him, interposing for their relief.

Sometimes, as it is written, "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him," the sufferer recognised in the altered demeanour of his over-bearing neighbours, God's answer to His prayer—God's out-stretched hand on his behalf.

At another time the sufferer would see that God abated the fury of the oppressor by diverting his attention to repulse of an attack on himself: as is to be seen in 1 Sam. xxiii. 25, where Saul was on one side of a mountain in pursuit of David, and he on the other; when a messenger brought Saul tidings of his kingdom being ravaged by the Philistines whom he was compelled to confront as soon as possible.

David, who would not avenge himself by rebellion against his

king, but waited on God, here perceived His hand; and thankfully exclaimed, this hath God done!

Another way in which the Lord interposes on behalf of those who wait for Him—is by leaving them under their bodily affliction, but giving them more grace wherewith to become experimentally acquainted with His goodness under it. (Ps. ix. 9, 10.)

In this manner, it is predicted in Isa. xxx. 18, that a chosen generation in Israel shall, at the time appointed, look for His hand in their behalf, when doubtless, this psalm will be reverently used by them in worship.

“And therefore will the Lord wait that He may be gracious unto you—and therefore will He be exalted that He may have mercy upon you. For the Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for Him.”

When our Lord Himself was in His natural body—He in His ministry, as may be seen in His Gospels, was the model of a servant looking to the hand of his master. One instance shall suffice; where it is written in John xvi. 32—“Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me!”

After this manner through Him—Who is our Propitiation and Advocate—Whom we personally worship, as we do the Father, by lifting up our eyes unto Him in the heavens, (John xiv. 1; Col. iii. 1, 2)—are we to wait upon God for His mercy; not avenging ourselves (Rom. xii. 20); nor repaying hate with hate; lest we should be overcome of evil—but committing ourselves to Him, Who judgeth righteously (1 Pet. ii. 23)—Who reckoneth that patient endurance of affliction, for well-doing, as thank-worthy. We are also to be assured that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able (1 Cor. x. 13); and that His grace is sufficient for us, where it pleases Him not to remove the thorn in the flesh. (2 Cor. xii. 9.) “For all things work together for good to them that love God.” (Rom. viii. 28.)

So that we can reverently say—“The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job i. 21); or, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth to Him good.” (1 Sam. iii. 18.)

1.

To Thee, to Thee mine eyes I lift,  
Who dwell'st above the sky.  
As servant on his master's hand  
Sets an attentive eye—

2.

Or on her mistress's the maid—  
So wait I upon Thine ;  
Till Thou in mercy to my need  
Thy gracious ear incline !

3.

Oh Jah, our God, do Thou on me  
Thy tender mercy shew !  
For 'neath the scorn of men at ease  
Do I dejected bow.

4.

My soul with agitating thoughts  
Beneath their scorn is toss'd—  
Beneath their rancorous despite,  
Who of their works make boast.

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## PSALM CXXIV.

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### TITLE.

A Song of ascents for David.

By the first verse it is plain that this psalm was written for the use of Israel upon occasion of some unparalleled deliverance of them as a nation, by the direct interposition of Messiah.

Owing to the use of מִן in verse 1, and מִן in 3, 4, 5, which nearly resembles the Chaldee מִן, and is found nowhere else, it is, as Rogers observes, to be concluded that this psalm was written during the captivity in Babylon, or subsequent thereto. Consequently the ל in the title must be translated "for," as in Ps. lxxii. and by מִן be understood "the beloved," or Messiah. (See Ps. lxxxix.)

### ARGUMENT.

It is certain that no such deliverance as that here described has been granted to Israel since that captivity ; consequently the occasion on which this psalm is specially intended to be sung has yet to arise. Such an event appears to be foretold in Ps.



xxi. 8—13, and in Ps. lxxxiii. 1—5, and by reason of a certain similarity in the imagery employed, it seems to me that this psalm is composed for the use of Israel on that occasion treated of in Isa. viii. 7—10.

For the kingdom of Assyria is there symbolised by a river which overflows its banks, exactly as in this hundred and twenty-fourth psalm the invaders are likened to waters—proud waters: and like as in Isaiah the “counsel” spoken of is destined to “come to naught, for God is with us”—in token whereof at verse 3 is give Him the name Immanuel—so in this hundred and twenty-fourth psalm, Israel on finding the attack made on them come to naught, shall say, we had been swallowed up if the Lord had not been on our side; our help is in the name of the Lord—more particularly because of being “with us,” as His name Immanuel was to denote.

For “the stream” to be all but “going over the soul” is more expressive than to “reach even to the neck,” as in Isa. viii. 8.

The rapidity wherewith a river that overflows its banks and fills a valley cuts off all escape for man or beast, vividly exemplifies the swiftness wherewith the invaders spoken of shall be ready to swallow up Israel alive.

It is easy for such waters to reach men’s necks, but for them to all but shut out men’s souls from rising, through hope in God, above them, is something far more. Now, supposing that the representatives of Israel as a nation on this occasion are to be “His hidden ones” mentioned in Ps. lxxxiii. 2; for the proud waters to have all but “gone over their soul,” denotes their approach to despair. (1 Cor. i. 8.)

This might arise from “the hidden ones,” though knowing that God could save them if He would, thinking that because of their unworthiness He would give them over, as He in strict justice might.

This is a line of thought under those circumstances which may easily be carried too far, so as to drive the soul into despair, if not helped. (See Isa. lvii. 16; Luke xxii. 43; Heb. v. 7.) But God “will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able” (1 Cor. x. 13); hence when by His direct intervention on the occasion foretold, the soul pressed beyond measure shall be relieved—the “snare” in which the hidden ones were indeed enthralled, by what advantage the tempter will take of their peril to make them think God ready to give them over, “shall be broken.”

The combination of force and fraud in this last attack to be resisted by “the hidden ones” (which is here likened to “the teeth of a lion,” or “the net of a fowler”) is similarly depicted in Ps. x. 9, which apparently treats of the same assault; and Ps. xci. 3, compared with 13.

The words of the sixth verse denote with what self-abasement in the transport of joy at their deliverance this chosen genera-

tion in Israel will ascribe to the Lord Jehovah the glory of their escape. Not deeming Him to have saved them because weighing their merits, but because pardoning their offences; so shall they in the very hour of triumph prove themselves to be His meek ones—poor in spirit.

The last verse may be taken as expressing a sentiment to be adopted by Israel through all intermediate time individually and collectively, because of what God will assuredly do for their deliverance on the day spoken of.

In 1 Sam. vii. 12 is to be seen how Israel of old confessed their help to be in the Lord. Also, in 1 Sam. xii. 22 is to be seen what lowliness of mind, combined with trust in God, is implied in saying, "Our help is in the Name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth." Truly His name of God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and of "strength of Israel," and of Immanuel, are full of special comfort to Israel; and we of the Christian Church, as being of the only remnant at this present of the true Israelites, claim to use them in respect of their spiritual significance. But we have yet a dearer and more precious name of God, specially vouchsafed to Israel in our age—the name of Jesus—wherein to rejoice, because it denotes that "He shall save His people from their sins."

It is very obvious that the entire psalm admits of being applied by us Christians to commemoration of our deliverances in soul from Satan's assaults as the roaring lion prowling about, seeking whom he may devour; or as the fowler that has entangled us in his snare; where, except that the Lord interposed and broke it, he would presently have come like a fowler to use us as it pleased him, only that through Jesus we can say, "The snare is broken, and we are escaped."

The name of Jesus sums up in one short word the thought of help in God which the dying believer so needs for his support. For His "Name's" sake, not our merit, He will restore our souls, and renew our part in Him by washing our feet; so that we can individually apply to ourselves the words spoken to Israel in Isa. xliii. 2.

"When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee!"

"They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee; because Thou Lord never failest them that seek Thee." (Ps. ix. 10.)

## 1.

Had not Jehovah, now may Israel say,  
Had not Jehovah stood upon our side,  
When men against us rose in dense array—  
When blaz'd their wrath forth 'gainst us far and wide—

2.

Then had they us, while yet alive, devour'd—  
As waters, had they drown'd us in their tide—  
Yea, had themselves, as waters, o'er us pour'd—  
And had our souls submerg'd beneath their pride.

3.

Now be Jehovah bless'd, Who did forbear  
From yielding us to our foes' teeth a prey.  
E'en as a bird 'scap'd from the fowler's snare,  
Our soul now goes rejoicing on its way.

4.

Broke is the snare that held us in its thrall,  
And we escap'd! Be ours then to proclaim,  
He who made heav'n and earth is over all!  
Our help is alway in Jehovah's Name!

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PSALM CXXV.

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TITLE.

A Song of ascents.

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ARGUMENT.

The Lord hath declared His purpose of manifesting by dealings with Israel in the earth during this mortal life, visible instances of His providential government. (Isa. xliii. 10; Rom. ix. 17.) To this end He gave them, after their exodus from Egypt and journey through the wilderness, the inheritance in Canaan by miraculous victories under Joshua.

Then again, for the same reason, He protected the Israelites in their land from invasion by their neighbours, during the time of their males having annually gone up to keep the three great festivals before the Tabernacle. (Exod. xxiv. 24.) And again, since their captivity, by singularly causing the ten tribes, which

are the larger portion, to be outcasts; but the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, to be conspicuously dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations. (Compare Numb. xxiii. 9 with Isa. xi. 12.)

In like manner, it is to be gathered from Scripture that God will yet make plain before men's eyes by His dealings with Israel at a day fast approaching, the judgment to come.

On this point the testimony gathered by me from Scripture is, that after a commencement of the judgment day shall have been made at the approach of our Lord towards this earth (1 Thess. iv. 16) when the sainted dead together with the sanctified among the living shall have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, judgment shall begin at the house of God. (1 Pet. iv. 17—19.)

After this shall follow the coming of the Lord with all His saints to the Mount of Olives for the rescue of a remnant of the citizens of Jerusalem, subsequent to its capture; as described in Zech. xiv. 4, 5—a coming which shall be seen by those alone whose eyes are opened for that purpose; as were theirs who witnessed the Lord's return from the grave after His resurrection, and were present at His Ascension from the Mount of Olives. (Acts x. 40, 41, and i. 9.)

After this shall follow the preaching of the gospel by this remnant, when duly prepared for that errand, among the ten tribes of Israel and the dispersed of Judah, with incidental benefit to the Gentiles among whom they shall discharge this ministry. (Rom. xi. 26.)

But upon the nations at present called to be Christian, for the most part cruelly persecuting these faithful Israelitish missionaries, and in their folly conceiving, that it remains for them to rebuild on the desolate site of Jerusalem the capital of the world's empire under Christ; these powers (entitled in Rev. xix. 20 the beast and the false prophet) shall be confounded by manifestation of the Sign of the Son of Man unto them in the clouds of heaven at the valley of Jehoshaphat. (Joel iii. 9—16; Isa. xvii. 12—14.)

And then shall take place, as is gathered by me from Scripture, commencement of judgment upon earth before the eyes of mortal men.

For the beast and the false prophet with their confederates shall be there cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Rev. xix. 20.)

And according to Isa. xxvi. 14 it is said of these, "They are dead, they shall not live—they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish"—so that they will have no further judgment. (Compare Rev. xx. 10.)

Whereas, of the persecuted Israelites, whom those nations, composing the beast ruled by the false prophet, had slain, it is

(as gathered by me from Scripture) testified at the 19th verse of of the same chapter of Isaiah:—

“Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust! for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers—that is, thy graves—and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

“For behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.

“The earth also shall disclose her blood; and shall no more cover her slain.”

Moreover, upon this resurrection of the martyred Israelites and their converts shall follow (as is gathered by me from Scripture) the going forth of these risen saints, along with other Israelitish survivors of that last tribulation, in mortal bodies, to fulfil the prediction in Ps. cxlix. from verse 5 to the end (though not perhaps immediately) where it is written—

“Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands.

“To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the peoples.

“To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron.

“To execute upon them the judgment written.

“This honour have all His saints. Hallelujah!”

A prediction entirely borne out by our Lord’s words in Rev. ii. 26:

“He that overcometh and keepeth My words unto the end,” (that is, of this present age) “to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father!”

These passages set forth on the one hand the judgments to overtake the wicked doers.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, another class of passages explicitly set forth the recompense in that day appointed for the just, that shall then be in mortal bodies on the earth.

For instance, in Matt. xiii. 41—43, the Saviour saith in His interpretation of the parable of the tares among the wheat:

“The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father.

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

Agreeably herewith our Lord, in His Epistle to the Angel of the Church of Sardis, saith (Rev. iii. 5) :

"He that overcometh, the same shall walk with Me in white (that is, lustrous) raiment; and I will not blot out His Name out of the book of life, but I will confess His Name before My Father, and before His Angels."

Here is specific mention of an emanation of light from the mortal bodies of certain faithful ones in Israel at that day to be so honoured; who (as is by me gathered out of Isa. xxvi. 19) are, after martyrdom, to come forth from their graves in mortal bodies: and (as is gathered by me from Rev. iii. 5) shall be exempted from liability to fall therefrom, or otherwise their return to earth would hardly be a gain to them. (Rev. iii. 12.)

Furthermore, in Isa. lxv. 22, the blessing of greatly extended life is promised to the sanctified ones in Israel of that age—"For as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people," and "they shall long enjoy the work of their hands"—a testimony illustrated by words of our Lord in His Epistle to the bishop of the Church of Ephesus, "that to him who overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God."

Let so much suffice for scriptural testimony concerning God's purpose of displaying His reward of the righteous on earth in the case of His Israel, exemplifying the Lord's language in Matt. xxv. 14, in the parable of the talents, where he states, that after absence for a long time, on His return to inquire into the fidelity of His servants in use of the talents committed to them, He shall say to the faithful (verse 21), "Well done! good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, rule thou now over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" or as St Luke expresses it (xix. 17), "rule thou over ten cities;"—shewing that the Lord is not here speaking of judgment universally upon all the righteous, but only in special, of those that shall have passed through the last persecution, already spoken of.

At the same time, these words express the *spirit* in which judgment shall be universally administered to the righteous.

Let it, however, be observed how the Lord's words above mentioned in the parable of the tares concerning "the gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity," throw light upon the 3rd verse of the psalm before us, namely, "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity"—here being an explanation of the reason why the Lord shall by the ministry of angels gather out of His kingdom "all things that offend."

That which was so strictly commanded to Moses and Joshua,

as we read in Deut. vii. 2—5, but which the Israelites thwarted their rulers in carrying out, shall be rigorously enforced throughout the nations at present Christian, which are to be ruled by the sanctified ones of that latter generation in Israel.

The above remarks it is trusted suffice to shew that the 3rd verse refers to that time when God will make bare on earth His last judgment in regard to Israel.

That manifestation shall be executed at the commencement of the great day of judgment. So shall the Lord fulfil that testimony in Prov. xi. 31, "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the ungodly and the sinner." That is, it shall be so done, not for all, but in respect of a certain generation—for vindication of God's dealings.

Here St. Paul, in 1 Cor. x. 11, speaks of that time as one at which the ends of the several ages that have preceded this—the Antediluvian, the Patriarchal, and the Mosaic,—shall have a concurrent termination: concurrent, I say; for it has been shewn already that the righteous dead from Abel's day, together with the saints worthy of translation, upon occasion of the Lord's approach toward this earth, shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and there undergo judgment; while the survivors on earth in Christian nations will fill up their measure of iniquity by persecution of a remnant whom the Lord Jesus shall as miraculously call to be believers in Him, by appearance to them on the Mount of Olives, as was Paul when arrested by Him on his road to Damascus to be thereupon made His minister.

And since these wrong-doers shall be cast down into the bottomless pit, red-handed, as were the inhabitants of Sodom, or Korah and his company, whom the earth opened her mouth to swallow up; on this account the Apostle warns all of this age in the kingdom of heaven to beware of indulging those errors of doctrine and of conduct which may even prepare them for such an instantaneous destruction without a moment for repentance.

For God ordinarily gives us time before He strikes to flee the threatened punishment. (Gen. xviii. 17, and xix. 12, 13.)

And there are in every such instance of space to repent many, we may believe, who at the last moment profit by it. (1 Pet. iii. 19—21.)

But the Apostle points out that such shall not be the case at the end of our age!

For it shall come suddenly, in an instant! And we know not how soon the world of this age may be put an end to by the coming of the first resurrection. (Heb. x. 26, 27.)

How carefully then ought we to aim at being of the number, in these Christian countries, for whom the psalmist, in the 4th and 5th verses, so significantly prays "as them that are upright in their hearts" (see Chron. xxix. 17), whom he designates by the name of "Israel," shewing that he here had regard to that dis-

inction between Israel in a carnal sense by ceremonial title, and Israel in regard of "the only remnant of the true Israelites" born from above, as set forth in John iii. 5, viii. 35, and Rom. ix. 60.

1.

All in Jehovah who believe,  
Like Zion's Mount shall be,  
Which off its base no pow'r shall heave—  
At rest immoveably.

2.

Jehovah near His saints doth stand,  
Securely shielding them :  
Like as the mountains of His land  
Enclose Jerusalem.

3.

Within His saints' inheritance  
The wicked shall not dwell ;  
Lest they fall by incontinence,  
As their forefathers fell.

4.

With all upright in heart and true,  
Jehovah, deal Thou well ;  
Make knaves their crooked practice rue.  
Peace be on Israel !

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PSALM CXXVI.

TITLE.

A Song of ascents.

ARGUMENT.

It appears to me that the redemption of Zion from captivity, spoken of in the first verse of this psalm, is the same with that predicted by our Lord in Luke xxi. 27, 28, and consequently synchronising with manifestation of the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.

It is true that sundry commentators incline to the idea that this psalm was composed in celebration of the return from Babylon.

But when we look at the testimonies in Ezra and Nehemiah to the actual condition of the Jews about the time of their return and long afterwards, we find no place for such a supposition.

In Ezra iii. 12, 13, though there was joy at rebuilding of the temple, it was drowned in loud lamentations of the fathers that recollected the former house.

And again in Ezra viii., where that noble Jew led a second time a band of his countrymen to the land of their forefathers, we see by verses 21—23 how dejected they were.

Also in Nehem. iv. 1—3 is to be seen how contemptuously the heathen at that time spake of the Jewish efforts to rebuild their city and temple; instead of saying, as predicted in the second verse of this psalm—"Jehovah hath done great things for them."

Again, at a later period, when the Septuagint doctors translated their Scriptures into Greek, it has been shewn, in treating of foregoing psalms, that they looked to the coming of Messiah as the only time of the nation's liberation; and spoke of their captivity as even then continuing, though they had returned to their own land.

The redemption spoken of in the first verse is treated as accomplished; because the prophets were accustomed to speak of what God had promised, as already obtained; owing to the firm persuasion of attainment thereto.

In this way we have seen that the eighty-fifth psalm is to be understood, which undoubtedly referred to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, through His birth of the Virgin, and again from the grave. (Acts xiii. 32—35.)

In a like sense we therefore reckon the psalmist to have here said—

"In Jehovah's turning again the returning of Zion, we were like them that dream!"

—meaning, that when He has done this, we shall be so.

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This interpretation of the first verse is borne out by observing that the verbs of the second verse are in the future tense ; as follows :—

“ Then shall our mouth be filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing ;

“ Then shall they say among the heathen, Jehovah hath done great things for them !”

(And Israel shall reply)—

“ Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad !”

Now, in regard to the dove-tailing of this psalm with other testimonies in Scripture touching the redemption of Israel, reference has already been made to our Lord's words in Luke xxi. 28, as synchronising therewith. On that supposition, it is to be observed, that the Scriptures speak of a great tribulation (Jer. xxx. 5—7 and Matt. xxiv. 21, 22) to overtake the Jews immediately prior to their final redemption.

This, it is with great probability thought, will overtake them through the bitter persecution of them by the nations nominally Christian, after that the Lord shall have returned to the small remnant of them surviving that capture of Jerusalem foretold in Zech. xiv. ; and fitted them to teach His pure Gospel (Rom. xi. 26), and sent them forth to convert the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah. (Isa. xi. 12.)

The nominally Christian nations being, as the Scripture seems to intimate (2 Tim. iii. 1—5), at that time indulging notions of ceremonial righteousness before God, after the manner of the Pharisees in the days of Jesus, will be (as is expected) no less fierce and bloodthirsty toward those Jewish missionaries for preaching justification by faith only in the merits of Christ, than were the Pharisees at Jesus for the same. (Luke xviii. 14.)

And it is to be gathered from sundry places in Scripture, taken in connection with Isaiah xxvi. 17—21, that the authorities throughout most nominally Christian countries of the isles, will so bitterly persecute those Jewish missionaries, that they will be compelled to accept death as their only escape.

When therefore they shall have been to a great extent slain (Matt. xxiv. 22) for their testimony to Jesus (Rev. vi. 11 and xiii. 10, 11), these nations—constituting “ the beast and the false prophet ”—having been rebuked in the Valley of Jehoshaphat by the Lord Himself (Joel iii. 12 and Rev. xix. 20) there will simultaneously take place in all countries, where the recent martyrdoms of Jewish missionaries shall have taken place, an emergence of them from their graves in lustrous raiment, so astounding to the residue of the Christian nations that had not gone up to Jerusalem, as to make them exclaim—

“ Jehovah hath done great things for them !”

and also to dispose the authorities among those nations to tender every public help for their honourable conveyance to the Lord's land by way of an offering—"a peace offering"—see Isa. lx. 9, 10, and lvi. 19, 20, and Mal. i. 11.

If this is a scriptural anticipation of the redemption here spoken of, no wonder that the happy recipients of it shall be "like them that dream;" like Peter in Acts xii. 9, when the angel liberated him from the prison. The misery under which these Jewish missionaries shall have succumbed, will have been so oppressive, as to make the change to glory in mortal flesh, on liberation from their tombs, to be like a dream!

But the Gentiles who behold it will exclaim—"Jehovah hath done great things for them!"

Compare Ps. lxxiii. 12—14. Oh! what a march will that be for Israel through the wilderness of the peoples! (Ezek. xx. 33—44.)

At the fourth verse occurs the following petition—

"Turn again our captivity, O Jehovah, as the streams in the South."

The word in the original for streams, נַחֲלִיּוֹת, is properly "hollows" that are receptacles for water, as are lakes at base of higher lands adjacent, sometimes called "basins."

Now "the South" is with as strict propriety affirmed of "the land beyond Æthiopia" in Africa, as "the North" is of Russia in Europe and in Asia.

And recent travellers—Speke, Baker, Livingstone—have shewn, that the flowing of the Nile is fed and regulated by the filling, and then emptying of, the overflow of a vast system or chain of lakes or basins in the interior of Africa, 2000 miles and upwards from the Nile's mouth. First, the rains in Abyssinia swell the Atbara or Blue Nile, which emptying itself into the White Nile feeds afresh that exhausted river, which in the first instance speeds away to the interior to the chain of basins for the purpose of raising them to the needful level for the wonted overflow. By-and-bye, in June, the sun melts the snow on the Mountains of the Moon under the Equator, and these waters reaching the Nile, which has by this time filled up the lakes, causes the overflow to roll for a thousand miles with an unexhausted flood through the burning deserts of Upper and Lower Egypt, fertilising the land and gladdening the population wherever they reach, for the four months of June, July, August and September. Thus the lake system of Africa supplies a land of drought with a mysterious flood from a hidden source, to a people that would otherwise be destroyed for want of water. Owing to the overflowing waters of the basins they are made rich, though themselves having no rain! (Rom. xi. 31.)

Now, it seems to me, that this wonderful event annually

recurring in Nature, of which the psalmist's countrymen may be supposed to have been easily aware, was here employed to symbolise the mysterious return of that portion of the outcasts of Israel that is in Africa.

For the xviii<sup>th</sup> of Isaiah, verse 1, beginning—

“Ho! to the land of the winged tsil-tsal—or tze-tze fly”—is a call to some remnant of that people “beyond the rivers of Æthiopia” or Abyssinia. The psalmist apparently provides, in this fourth verse, the “dispersed” Jews among nations nominally Christian, a prayer for the recovery of “the outcasts;” that they too should return to bless the nations on their route to the Lord's land, after the same mysterious manner wherein the Nile waters, from no humanly discerned source, enrich the desert of Egypt.

This prayer reminds us of St. Paul's vehement asseveration in Rom. xi. 12—15. In the next verse the psalmist reverts to the sorrow in which the Jewish missionaries sent forth out of Zion shall accomplish their errand. (Rom. xi. 26.) For it is not invariably true, that those “who sow in tears, shall reap in joy;” for some sorrow is not after a godly sort: and even if it be, there is no pledge from God that it shall redound to the sufferer's greater joy on earth in the mortal body; but it is intended to be here testified that the Jewish missionaries specially referred to shall find this to be the case. (Isa. xxv. 10.)

The last verse treats of the same sorrowful discharge of the Gospel mission by individual Jews: its literal words are—

“Going to go one shall weep, bearing his seed-basket.

Coming to come he shall laugh, bearing his sheaves!”

the meaning being, that though the ministry among the nations discharged by those Jews shall have been embittered with unprecedented tribulation, ending in their glad acceptance of death for the sake of the Lord Jesus: on the morn of their resurrection, when they shall see many clad in white lustrous raiment like their own—out of their own countrymen and the Gentiles made one in Jesus (Ephes. xi. 19; Rev. iii. 5)—this sight of “the fruit of their labour” will produce ecstatic praise of God. (Isa. xlix. 4 and 18—21.) Surely here is a psalm well fitted to be studied when contemplating, as we are invited to do on the third Sunday in Advent, that part of the judgment on behalf of the righteous, which at the beginning of the Millennium the Lord at His return shall execute on earth; after that the judgment upon them caught up to meet Him in the air shall have been concluded!

For it is written in the fifty-eighth psalm, verse 11, “a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous. Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth!”

Here is an exemplification to the full of that praise which the

Lord Jesus pronounced on John Baptist (Matt. xi. 2—15), which is by the Apostolic Church from the earliest age cited as a sample of what He will pronounce on His faithful ones that serve Him, in that generation prior to His return.

It surely is of the utmost importance to join consideration of what God will do for the chosen generation of Israel on earth with what He will do for us of this age, whether out of Jews or Gentiles, who about the time of his return shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. (1 Thess. iv. 16.) For it is by dealings with Israel in the flesh, that God hath pledged Himself to make incontestably known upon earth His Providential rule, and only way of justification!

The Bishops of Rome called the members of their supreme council Cardinals, in the expectation that all Christendom would look to them as the rulers, on whose decrees, as on hinges, the world's affairs would take a new direction. Whereas the Scriptures shew that God hath appointed His decrees immediately from heaven respecting His people Israel, to be as it were the Cardinals or hinges, which He will publicly move, when about to turn the current of renewal with the Holy Spirit, by means of the Gospel in a new direction! (Matt. xxi. 43, and Rom. xi. 25.) Hence the importance of studying in Scripture God's promises to Israel, and the progress of events on earth toward their fulfilment.

1.

Jehovah's turning Zion back  
From her captivity,  
Made us, as them that dream, and lack  
Proof of reality!

2.

Drown'd in our laughter and our song,  
Shall heathen voices say,  
Jehovah doth avenge their wrong—  
Jehovah hath, this day!

3.

Turn us, as in the South is turn'd  
The lake-chain's overflow,  
Jehovah! so shall they have earn'd  
Joy, who in tears did sow.

4.

Tho' he that, as he goeth, grieves,  
 What time he bears good seed—  
 Come harvest, to come fill'd with sheaves  
 In transports, is his mead.

PSALM CXXVII.

TITLE.

A Song of ascents for Solomon.

In reliance on the title, explained as that of Ps. lxxii, it may be concluded to have been composed by David, for Solomon's use.

One observation in support of this conclusion is gathered from that expression at the end of verse 2, "He giveth His beloved sleep." The word for "His beloved" being in Hebrew the very name "Jedidiah," which Nathan was commissioned by the Lord to give to Solomon. (2 Sam. xii. 25.)

ARGUMENT.

Viewing the psalm before us as the work of David in his old age, it expresses his solemn conviction that by God alone could his house or kingdom be established.

The aged king appears to have referred in this psalm to the words of God brought unto him by Nathan, in reply to David's desire to build a house or temple to the Lord.

In 2 Sam. vii. verse 11, we read that Nathan added, "Also the Lord telleth thee, that He will build thee a house." "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name; and I will stablish the throne of His kingdom for ever."

These words, though in a proximate sense referring to Solomon, did indeed reach forward to the coming of Christ—that Son of David, which should proceed forth from his bowels, (Acts ii. 30,)

from Whom, (as was predicted in the 89th psalm, quoted by Nathan, in 2 Sam. vii. 14.) God had, before David's birth, promised never to take away His mercy; but that it should be "sure." (Isa. lv. 3.)

Here let it be observed, how the word "house" is in 2 Sam. vii. 11 and 13, used in two senses—being by David employed to mean a temple; but by the Lord applied to the family which should spring out of the loins of David.

Here is the requisite authority for taking "house" in this psalm to mean a family; for in that way the mention of "children," in verse 3, will exhibit a connected train of thought throughout the psalm.

We are to consider that David, bearing in mind what great promises God had made to him concerning the line of descendants which should lead up to the birth of Messiah, shews how so great promises were to be no ground with Solomon for an assumption that the truth of God would compel Him to make good His word on this head, no matter how David's intermediate descendants might misbehave. The eighty-ninth psalm, from which Nathan had been instructed to quote, warned David that his descendants would provoke God to inflict heavy calamities on his family; Who nevertheless would be faithful to His promise concerning the birth of the Messiah in David's line.

Accordingly, David when writing this psalm, for Solomon's guidance in the matter of seeking a goodly family of sons and daughters, (compare 1 Chron. xvii. 16—27.) charges him (as we see in the first verse of this psalm), to trust not so much in his youth and health and wealth, as in the Lord, for the procurement of a goodly family; and of course meant, that if Solomon would take the Lord for the ground of his hope in this matter, he must make the Lord's precepts the rule of his public and private conduct. It is lamentable to think, that notwithstanding Solomon's pre-eminent endowment with genius, and his aptitude for scientific acquirements—not to mention the promises of Divine favour, confirmed by the Lord's appearance to him twice, (1 Kings xi. 9.) he neither heeded the precepts of the Lord in his choice of a wife, nor yet in regard to the government of his state, called in this first verse "the city." The progress of Israel as a nation from the time that they left Egypt with its bondage, may be said to have been advancing onward to its culmination, when Solomon ascended the throne of his father David.

Wherefore for him, in the face of God's law expressed in Deut. xvii. 16—20, to incline to Egypt's king of all monarchs for a wife—to negotiate procurement of horses from thence, (2 Chron. ix. 21—28.) to multiply his store of gold and of wives—was to walk contrary to the Lord in every particular specified. Added to this, he, as testified in 2 Chron. viii. 11,

provided, without compunction, for his heathen queen, a place for her idolatrous worship; which was in the teeth of the Lord's law, in Deut. vii. 2—26; and "because punishment on his evil work was not executed speedily, therefore his heart obeying the motions of sins in his flesh" (Rom. vii. 5.) "was fully set in him to do evil" in this direction more and more—by loving many strange women, (1 Kings xi. 1—43.) and building idolatrous places for their country's custom. The consequence was, that he not only manned his numerous forts with watchmen in vain, 1 Kings ix. 22; 2 Chron. ix. 25; (for long before he died, ten of the tribes were ready to revolt from him, and actually did rebel on his son's accession to the throne); but beside this, in the matter of building his house, notwithstanding his multitude of wives, history mentions but one child as borne him—his son Rehoboam—so that the line through which the Messiah was to come was all but cut off in the very first stage of the descent. As Solomon was so extensive a builder of fortresses, and so diligent a pursuer of wisdom, he doubtless rose up early in that beautiful climate, and grudged himself the hours for sleep; presenting in fact the appearance sketched in the second verse of this psalm, of one who found the day too short for all the schemes he had the vigour to originate, and the wish to carry out.

But in his eagerness after results, as though he had no time for the worship of God, and saw not any need of God's blessing, when strong enough to do things of himself, he emphatically "ate the bread of sorrows," as he testified in his book entitled, *Ecclesiastes*, or the *Preacher*; saying at the last verse of the first chapter, "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." Although this was true in Solomon's experience, the reason was to be found in the warning words of his father in the first two verses of this psalm.

It may be truly said, that where the pursuit of wisdom is made, as it ought to go second to that of God's service, according to His inspired word, so far from increase of wisdom or knowledge being an increase of sorrow, it, on the contrary, greatly increases our means of joy in the Lord, by ministering fresh themes of inexhaustible richness for the soul's employment in praise of Him. (Philip. i. 9.) Thus it appears that Solomon's testimony, even when guided by inspiration, was like his inner life before God, a conflict of utterances, true indeed, like Balaam's, but needing to be interpreted for or against himself, by careful comparison of them with the inspired utterances of more consistent men in other parts of holy Scripture. For Scripture must not be made to contradict itself. Had Solomon but employed his unrivalled genius, and the vast resources of his state in the tender fear of the Lord God of his father, the results would have been very different, (Deut. vii.); his own life



would have been prolonged, (1 Kings iii. 14.) ; he might have left a numerous posterity ; and have kept Israel undivided.

In vain did David fondly anticipate that Solomon's name Jedidiah, or loved of God, would be a foretoken of his numerous progeny, which David justly considered so desirable for the establishment of a royal house. Had Solomon, who was free to marry in his youth, sought the guidance of the Lord in the choice of his queen, he might have had children of youth, which David, in verse 4, compares to arrows in the hand of a mighty man, wherewith to effectually repel all attacks from enemies in the gate of council (Psalm ix. 13), or of war, (Judges v. 8.)

The expression "He," namely God, "giveth His beloved sleep," is very emphatic.

Luther appears to have best comprehended the meaning of this clause, who in his German version has it thus, "Surely God giveth it in sleep ;" as being a reference to the fact in nature, that children grow in stature while asleep.

So sweetly, so gently likewise, does the blessing of God in answer to a believer's labour in dependence on Him, work out the accomplishment of his desires he knows not how ! This dependence on God conduces to longevity. For whereas excessive care wears one away, legitimate diligence with subsequent reliance on God, makes the strait tolerable. (See Gen. xxxii.)

In this sense our Saviour saith, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow," that is for the *issue*, after you have done all that prudence and your own resources leave in your power for to-day, and have committed your labour to the Lord in prayer. To-morrow belongs to the Lord, and "He will provide." (Gen. xxii. 14.) "Let the morrow therefore take thought for the things of itself." (1 Pet. v. 7.) "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" — evil being here in the sense of affliction. (Matt. vi. 34.) St. Paul gives similar counsel in Phil. iv. 6. Here then is a rule of life for every one living under the light of revealed religion, whether in regard to private or public matters, in the state or the church of God. Parents need not be overtaken with anxiety in regard to their children, because of seeing no signs of their conversion ; nor yet ministers, in regard of their flocks. (See Eccles. xi. 6.) Let them make the charge in the first two verses of this psalm, the system on which they proceed, trusting in the Lord, Who giveth the increase in His beloved's sleep. So trusts the great Son of David in His Father, after having Himself finished the work given Him to do, "to see His seed, and prolong His days." (Isa. liii. 10.)

1.

Vainly the house were built  
Without Jehovah's care,  
Vainly the city watch'd  
Without Jehovah there.

2.

To rise before the dawn,  
And late to take one's rest,  
To eat the bread of care  
One vainly is distressed.

3.

He surely His belov'd  
With growth in sleep endows—  
So from Jehovah drops  
His grace too on one's vows.

4.

Lo! from Jehovah comes  
The offspring of the womb.  
Like darts in mighty hands  
Are children of youth's bloom.

5.

Happy the man whose house  
Doth with such darts abound;  
Foes hardly in the gate  
'Gainst him will hold their ground.

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## PSALM CXXVIII.

### TITLE.

#### A Song of ascents.

In regard to the time when it is probable that this psalm was composed, the expression in the first line, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord," instead of the more usual form, "Blessed is the man," inclines one to assign this psalm a late origin, that is to say after the Captivity.

The phrase in verse 5, "The Lord shall bless Thee out of Zion," is apparently a reference to the prediction in Ps. cx. 2, touching the sending forth of the rod of the Lord's power out of Zion at the coming of Messiah to Israel.

That coming was expected to bring peace to Jerusalem, with plenty, and length of days, and a numerous progeny to every one in Israel that should be living under Messiah's rule.

The Scriptures also spake of Gentiles being through faith partakers in these blessings. (See Isa. ii. 1—4.)

If it be granted that the blessings characterising Messiah's reign over Israel are referred to in the last two verses of this psalm; then the expression in the first verse, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord," may have been designedly intended to include the Gentile along with the believing Israelite herein at the time spoken of. (See 2 Chron. vi. 32, and Isa. lvi. 7.)

The Jews on their return from Babylon appear to have been more thoroughly persuaded than before of the part which Gentiles should have in the blessings which should through them flow from Messiah.

Hence the expression, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord," may be regarded as akin to that of Peter, when, as related in Acts x. 34, after witnessing the work of the Holy Ghost on Gentile hearts in the house of Cornelius, he said, "Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

The translation of the Jewish Scriptures into Greek for Ptolemy Philadelphus shews that Jewish Rabbis had in that day enlightened and liberal views upon this subject. And it seems to me that they may have not been the first of their countrymen after their return from Babylon to entertain such evangelical desires—but that the possible effect of Daniel's holy example, and that of other pious Jews, upon Gentiles in Babylon and among the Persians during the Captivity, may have enlarged their

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hearts on this subject, after the manner in which Peter's is shewn to have been enlarged, at sight of what God wrought by means of the word of His grace to the conversion of souls unto Him.

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### ARGUMENT.

This psalm begins with the words—

“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in His ways.”

On this, let it suffice to observe, that the fear here inculcated, is not that which superstitious people manifest when afraid to be in the dark, or to pass through a church-yard by night—a superstition which is compatible with an utterly ill-conditioned temper morally—but a fear which disposes one to heed what God bids us do; which is, to walk in His ways.

There is no excuse for not walking in His ways, where the holy Scriptures are freely circulated. But where their circulation is authoritatively checked, the more blame rests on those who stand in the way of everyone's enlightenment by them, in the fear of God.

For the holy Scriptures contain beyond question the only authoritative exposition of those ways wherein God would have every one walk who fears Him.

The following verses may be regarded as exponents of these ways.

Firstly, man shall not eat the bread of idleness, but be diligent.

The words of this verse are—

“For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands. Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.”

Although God appoints some in the course of His providence to be born in so wealthy a condition as not to need work for bare subsistence, He does not thereby mean that they should grow up in idleness. The evils of idleness are emphatically set forth in holy Scripture; in no place more so than in Ezek. xvi. 49, where we read, “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness.”

Diligence is also solemnly inculcated, as in Prov. xii. 27, xiii. 4.

But there are various departments of labour, mental as well as manual, in the social fabric, wherein God requires men to engage themselves in His fear, according as He shall have ordered their birth, of poor or wealthy parents.

Hence St. Paul saith, in 1 Cor. vii. 20, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called;” and again at verse 24, “Let him therein abide with God.”

Also in 2 Tim. ii. 20 we read—

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"In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these"—namely, the profane and vain babblings (verse 16), and youthful lusts (verse 22), but follow after graces, "he shall be a vessel of honour" in the house of God, that shall be made new. (See Isa. lvy. 17; Rev. xxi. 1—5.)

Also in 2 Thess. iii. 10, St. Paul saith, "If any would not work, neither should he eat."

Again, where one labours, it is God's way that he should eat thereof; that is, should spend so much of his earnings as is needful for procurement of food that shall sustain his strength.

On this point, the wise man saith in Eccles. ii. 24, "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour."

It therefore is not according to the way of God, that the man who fears Him should stint himself in regard of needful food and clothing, lest he should not earn enough; he ought to trust in God to give him means of employment; and he is to use his resources intelligently, that he may be ready for what opportunities of further employment may offer themselves. When this is done, not lavishly, but in dependence on God, worthy reliance is thereby shewn upon Him, and happiness shall ensue to such an one, as also a flourishing state of affairs. By the third verse, it appears to be the way of God, that this man should marry when able to support a wife: for it is not good for man to be alone. (Gen. ii. 18.) And woman is sent into the world to be man's helpmeet; her provision too is by the labour of man's hands; so that it is part of God's ways, that one who feareth Him, should think of providing for some one woman, as his wife; and that too in the prime of life, so soon as a man finds wherewithal to eat by the labour of his hands.

For the children of youth are the strong and healthy children. (Ps. cxxvii. 4.) Nor shall he, whom God has enabled to eat by the labour of his hands, find himself no longer able to do so, in case his wife shall bear him a numerous family; on the contrary, he shall still eat of the labour of his hands, as also his wife and his young children.

The Lord will no more permit the wayfaring man, who has contracted marriage in His fear, to fail in something to eat, something to drink, something to put on (Matt. vi. 31, 32)—than did the Lord Jesus permit that pious couple, to whose marriage "He was called," to sustain an abrupt hindrance of their temperate festivity, through lack of wine for the guests.

The fourth verse, being prefaced with the exclamation, Behold! emphatically challenges God's people to make proof of His truth herein.

That man, who eats of the fruit of his labour, and marries early shall be happy, and it shall be well with him!

The next two verses pass to specification of what this industrious man, who walks in God's ways, is to do with his family, that they may be reared for God. By the words in verse five, "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion," reference was apparently made by the psalmist to the coming of Messiah; of whom it had been prophesied in Ps. cx. 2, "The Lord shall send the rod of Thy power out of Zion:" as was the case when the Apostles preached it there, proclaiming the things that our Saviour testified (Luke xix. 42.) belong to the peace of Jerusalem.

Although for this present age in the kingdom of heaven, literal Jerusalem has not received Christ's peace; yet the children of Zion born there, (Ps. lxxxvii. 6, 7,) by faith in the rod of His power, Who there rose from the dead, and is the Resurrection and the Life—those children of Zion, whether Jews or Gentiles—being the only remnant at this present of the true Israelites, by fearing the Lord, and walking in His ways, see even now spiritually the things belonging to the peace of Jerusalem.

And it is implied in the fifth and sixth verses, that these Israelites indeed, who walk in the ways of the Lord, shall see their children Christianly and virtuously brought up; because they remember the Divine precept, "Train up a *child* in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Marriage was instituted for this important purpose of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Mal. ii. 15.)

Marriage was instituted by God for the purpose of bringing into the world successive generations of elect souls, which God had before all eternity covenanted with His Son to save, and give to Him as by a covenant of marriage.

He might have ordered otherwise the entrance of these souls upon a course of probation during life on earth. But none can be conceived so fitted, as this, of their descent from a human pair, to bind the whole in one community. Owing to this manner of entrance on bodily life, all are for their early years subjected to the absolute rule of their parents. Now, had man never fallen, this method of providing for training of souls newly come into the world, would have been admirably fitted to have prepared them for eminence in God's own rest; to which, after this life of probation had been passed through, they should have been translated.

The success of Satan in seducing man into transgression only made this way for the entrance of elect souls into the fallen world more to their advantage, than if they had entered it as adults; if only parents would know how to give their own

children the best instruction in their power. Thus education and training were given a vast advantage, by being confided to parents, who might begin to work on God's behalf, for promotion of their child's acquaintance with Him from infancy.

Here is the best method we can conceive for preparing souls, as they should come into the world, for willing enrolment, when of full age, by confirmation, in the congregation of God; and for union by faith with Christ in spirit. But as the state in which man is placed here is one of probation, whatever God gives for his good is through his misuse capable of perversion.

Hence, wherever parents have been debarred from opportunity of knowing God's truth, or have been indifferent to it, though within their reach, their very influence over their children has been ignorantly employed for their hardening in ways of error antagonistic to God's truth.

This makes it only more important that those living in the light of revealed truth (as were the psalmist's own people) should solemnise marriage according to the Divine institution; and should remember, that their children are intrusted to them by God for nurture in His fear; that they may, when old enough to act for themselves, intelligently choose the same, and thereby make their calling and election sure unto admission into the rest that remaineth after this life for the people of God.

Ought we not then to regard the mention in the third verse of the "wife," as one of the "ways of God," that he who eats by the labour of his hands in the fear of God (and *a fortiori* every one born to a competence) is to follow? If the middle state of society—equally removed from destitution and 'capital' wealth, is the most favourable for a virtuous life, (Prov. xxx. 7, 9.) is not that man in this station, who eats by the labour of his hands? Is not he then in the class to which God more especially looks in the course of His providence to bring up a family for Him?

Polygamy, which (to begin with) is not one of the ways of God, has never, even in countries where it has prevailed, been an efflorescence of the man eating by the labour of his hands; but only of the overgrown rich man; and it is a fertile occasion of strife between the children by different mothers; so that it is utterly unfavourable for the building up of the Church of God. Again, fornication is still more so: for it instigates the male parent in the selfishness of lust, to tempt the female parent to destroy the fruit of her womb; and is a condition of life in which the offspring are ordinarily left in utter neglect. It is therefore a manifestly devilish perversion of God's holy institution of marriage, as depicted in Malachi, in 2nd chapter, verses 14—16, which is authoritatively enforced by our Lord, in Matt. xix. 3—9. It is true that when the psalmist held out the hope of plenty and of a numerous progeny to be born by a wife of youth—as also the comfort of seeing them choosing the fear of the Lord,

when of age to act for themselves—and the peace of the congregation of the Lord, and the longevity of the parents—he spake of Israel as being under a special providence; inasmuch as these blessings were promised to those within the bond of the Mosaic covenant, provided they kept it. (Deut. iv. 40, and iv. 25.) The like whereto shall be restored in Messiah's millennial reign. Nevertheless this psalm may be regarded as setting forth what God will ordinarily ensure to "everyone that fears God and walks in his ways." Agreeably herewith, St. Peter adapts the 34th Psalm to our condition in the Christian covenant, under God's ordinary providence. (Luke xxii. 35—37.) For, as that Apostle there shews us at verse 14 of chapter three of his first Epistle, if we fear God and walk in His ways, and have not enough to eat by labour of our hands—or have not a family of children—God will make plain to us wherefore He calls us to wait on Him patiently in the lack of these things. St. Paul's language is to the like effect in Philip. iv. 10—13.

By the tenour of this psalm it is to be gathered, that to have the fear of God, and walk in His ways, is ordinarily the way to see good days even on earth, and to be happy in one's mind, and persuaded of its being well with one.

The psalmist would also hereby have us conclude, that the fear of the Lord is an invigorating principle—the nurse of virtues and graces, to be gained by asking for them—making a man useful to the State and to the congregation of the Lord.

This psalm, so contemplated, reminds one of St. Paul's testimony to Timothy, (1 Ep. vi. 5, 6.) where he rebukes those who reckon godliness to be gain; but, adds he, "godliness with contentment is great gain, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

## 1.

How blest is every one,  
That doth Jehovah fear;  
In His most holy ways  
Resolv'd to persevere.

## 2.

Thine own hands, righteous one,  
Gain store enough for thee—  
Thy heart shall be at ease—  
With thee it well shall be.



3.

As at thy home thy vine—  
So clothes<sup>1</sup> thy house thy wife—  
And children round thy board,  
Like olive sucklings thrive.

4.

Lo ! thus Jehovah shall  
Thy happiness increase !  
Jehovah thee shall bring  
From out of Zion peace.

5.

Through life Jerusalem  
In honour shalt thou see  
Four<sup>2</sup> generations long !  
Peace upon Israel be !

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 3. Prov. xxxi. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 6. Job xlii. 16.

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PSALM CXXIX.

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TITLE.

A Song of ascents.

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ARGUMENT.

By the mention of Israel in the first verse it is evident that this psalm was written for use of the nation, collectively, in a time of affliction.

By mention of Israel's youth the reader's thoughts are carried back to the time when the nation first arose. This was after the cruel bondage under the Egyptians, when the Lord interposed from heaven for their deliverance.

Since that time, not only the smaller nations adjacent to the

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Holy Land, but Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, Romans, have in turn been employed by God as instruments in His hands (Isa. x. 5) for chastisement of His people's backslidings.

But these successive enslavements of Israel in due time came to an end, and the nations which inflicted them, though at the time of their ascendancy mightiest, have dwindled into insignificance.

Whereas Israel, as represented by its smaller remnant of the two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—lives in presence of the mightiest nations at this present.

Even though at this very day suffering national divorcement by God (Isa. l. 1) for their rejection of the Gospel when preached to them first, by the command of Jesus after His resurrection, (1 Thess. ii. 14), these two tribes live in presence of the mightiest nations among the Gentiles.

Hence, even that part of them which believe not in Jesus can, by means of this psalm, find consolation in warrant for hope in God; but how much more so the small remnant of them who believe in Jesus!

This preservation of the small remnant of a nation through successive enslavements by one conqueror after another, is otherwise unparalleled, excepting only in the history of the Church of Christ Jesus the Lord, with which there will be opportunity in this exposition of shewing it to be in combination—the Israel spoken of in the first verse being that elder section of sheep mentioned by our Lord Jesus, in John x. 15—18, as destined by Him to form, in combination with that other section of us Gentiles, one flock having one Shepherd.

The bush shewn to Moses in the wilderness burning with fire, yet not consumed (Exod. iii. 2), was the appointed emblem of God's Israel, afflicted from youth up, because of backslidings, yet not utterly prevailed over; and for the same reason—namely, because of God being in the midst, as testified in Ps. xlv. 5. Nor is this present affliction, bowing down the visible remnant of Israel in their national capacity, the last that they may expect.

There is mentioned in Zech. xiv. a siege of Jerusalem, the leading features of which agree not with the recorded events marking any capture of that city hitherto; so that it only remains to be concluded that there shall yet be sustained by Jerusalem, after it shall have been rebuilt and ruled by Jews, another siege and capture, against which this psalm is provided for the support of a faithful remnant in the God of Abraham. Judging from Ps. xxix., compared with other passages of the prophets, the Jews constituting the visible remnant of Israel (so far as they shall have been persuaded to return unto their own land) will be all but cut off by that invader, who will capture Jerusalem; but at that crisis the Lord Jesus will manifest Himself with all His

saints on the Mount of Olives to a small remnant of the survivors of that siege, and destroy the invader with his host, after the manner in which Sennacherib was overwhelmed; as has been supposed to be sung of in Ps. lxxvi.

With what gratitude then, after such a rescue, will the surviving remnant take up the words of this psalm in their desire to bear testimony to God's righteousness!

The similitude in verse 3 is by different commentators differently explained. Some think that the plough spoken of implies that the people are to be likened to the very ground which the share rends; as God likens them thereto in Isa. li. 23.

Others suppose that the cords, mentioned in verse 4, imply that the conquerors fastened the enslaved Jews as beasts of burden to the ploughs, which should plough the soil of their land. But those commentators seem to me to be preferable who see here a reference to the use of the lash upon the backs of afflicted Jews by those who had brought them into bondage—a bondage lasting in sundry instances for many generations—and in that sense “making long furrows.”

The righteousness of the Lord, as testified at verse 4, in “cutting asunder the cords of the wicked,” is to be explained by reference to the Lord's promises in regard to the punishment of Israel, whereby it plainly behoves Him, for His own Name's sake, to save them from being wholly destroyed.

The rule of righteousness in His dealing with Israel is to be gathered from two passages in the prophets—one in Amos iii. 2, where we find God saying:

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.”

And that other in Jer. xxx. 11:

“I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.”

This is the ground of confidence in the Lord's righteousness, in “cutting asunder the cords of the wicked,” for “His own Name's sake.” (1 Sam. xii. 22.)

In verse 5 it is said, “Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.”

This is obviously fitted to be a source of comfort under all affliction to those who indeed belong to Zion; analogous to that in Ephes. vi. 24, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;” or that in Rom. ix. 28—“All things work together for good to them that love God.”

But from a very early day in Israel arose a misconception (Ps. xiv. 5, 6) as to the true warrant for being persuaded that one was of the citizens of Zion in truth.

For under the Mosaic covenant all males enrolled in the congregation of the Lord by circumcision had a sacramental title in their flesh to be called children of God, and citizens of Zion (so soon as Zion had been chosen by God for His unchanging seat). (Ps. lxxviii. 67—70.)

In Ps. xiv. is shewn how rulers and doctors of the congregation of Israel, contenting themselves with that sacramental title in their flesh to the Lord's favour, cared not for further endeavour after the same, by renewal with the Spirit of Christ, in answer to prayer for it (Ps. li. 10), as had been the way for obtaining renewal from the time of man's fall (Gen. vi. 3); and so far from having been superseded by the Mosaic covenant, had only been brought into alliance with the ceremonial righteousness required therein. (Rom. v. 20; Gal. iii. 19.)

Through this misconception the rulers of the congregation of Israel, in the lifetime of the Lord Jesus, reckoned that He was assuredly to be confounded and turned back as a hater of Zion, because He in His teaching bore witness against their corruptions of the truth of God, and disregard of His holy Scriptures. (John v. 45—47.)

It hence came to pass that these rulers and doctors of Israel were "the plowers" who plowed upon the back of the Lord Jesus—literally procuring the scourging of Him as a slave: and on this account Matthew, in chap. ii. 15, in anticipation of what they would so do, applied to the bringing up of Jesus when a babe out of Egypt, those words of Hosea, xi. 1, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son!"

On looking at that quotation, thus authoritatively applied to the Lord Jesus, we find that the whole passage contains mention of Israel. This therefore proves that St. Matthew regarded Jesus as emphatically worthy of that name—being the Root of the people of God so called, as of David and of Abraham. (Rev. xi. 8; xxii. 16.)

It hence is clear how the word "Israel," in the first verse of this psalm, is to be interpreted; to wit, as referring to those who are the children of the promise, as was Isaac. (Gal. iv. 28.) For Paul, in Rom. ix. 6, saith on this head, "They are not all Israel that are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Compare John viii. 31—44.) By the same rule of interpretation Zion is to be understood as the city in which, according to Ps. lxxxvii., the rising Saviour should be born from the grave (Acts xiii. 32, 33), in Whom whosoever believeth is buried by the Holy Ghost through faith, as baptism certifies. (John v. 24; Rom. vi. 4.)

So that, to use the language of one of our hymns, we should say:—

"Saviour, if of Zion's city  
 I *through* grace a member am,  
 Let the world deride or pity,  
 I will glory in Thy Name!"

This is the only sense in which a Jew can at this time rightly take up the words of this 5th verse—"all they shall be confounded and turned back that hate Zion;" instead of misapplying it, as did the rulers and doctors of Israel in our Lord's life-time, who would fain have made out Jesus to be a hater of Zion, and one to be confounded and turned backward, because a hater of their unscriptural traditions. Under this delusion they,—the very rulers of Israel for the time being—became the ploughers that ploughed upon the back of Him who was in very deed the Judge of Israel (Micah v. 1)—the root of Israel according to the promise—until at His resurrection God Himself in righteousness cut in sunder the cords of that lash wherewith the unworthy representatives of Zion in the flesh, scourged Him in the flesh as a slave—sold Him for the price of a slave—and procured Him a slave's execution.

In the 6th verse, where it is said—

"Let them be as the grass upon the house-top, which withereth afore the flower bursts its sheath, wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he (makes a band) that bindeth the sheaves (to fill) his arm."

It is to be observed, that Scripture frequently compares man to the grass of the field, which "to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven"—which "in the morning is green and groweth up, in the evening is cut down and withereth." (Ps. xc. 6.) But the use to which this familiar similitude is here put is special, denoting some oppressor of Israel even not worthy to be compared with the grass of the field for transitoriness, but with the grass on the house-top.

Now, on the supposition that this psalm has been written for the use of "the Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16) in all their afflictions, even to the consummation, it is to be observed, that there may be in this last similitude a foreshadowing of the last conspiracy against Israel that is dwelt on in the psalms.

In commenting on the eighty-third psalm it was shewn that this conspiracy will apparently be directed against the little remnant surviving the last capture of Jerusalem, foretold in Zech. xiv., which for a few years will be under preparation in the desolate ruins, for their mission as "the deliverer that shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. xi. 26.)

At that time, when known to be utterly defenceless and few in number, the surrounding tribes shall suddenly conceive a design "which they are not able to perform:" (Ps. xxi. 11.) namely, that of "taking crafty counsel against God's people, and consulting against His hidden ones;

“Saying, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.” (Ps. lxxxiii. 3, 4.)

Now seeing that this remnant of Israel will be “that latter generation” promised Abraham (Ps. lxxviii. 4—6); Israel, in that sense above explained, will never be nearer extinction than at the time of that conspiracy: but so shortlived will be its fierceness—so total its discomfiture (after the manner of Midian, in Judges vi. 21—25)—that it will rather resemble the grass on the house-tops, than that in the fields, for transitoriness: it shall also be a work far from having any one to bless it; on the contrary, all that love Zion will devoutly desire of the righteous Lord, to Whom vengeance belongeth, that He would destroy such a conspiracy, which would shut out mankind from the promised happiness to be derived from Him in Christ through Abraham; as in Ps. cxxxvii. 7—9, and Rom xii. 18—21.

After this deliverance, how rapturously will that chosen generation of Israel take up this psalm as mowers, whom the Gentiles that behold them going forth to bind their sheaves, shall bless in their work; while they yield themselves to their teaching, and to the Lord Jesus through them. (Zech. viii. 23; Isa. xlv. 3—5.)

The believer, whether out of Jews or Gentiles, who, because of incorporation with Christ, is of the only remnant of the true Israelites at this present, can in affliction seek comfort by use of this psalm; seeing that it will persuade him by the uniform tendency of God’s chastening of Israel, that “He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth” (Heb. xii. 6): wherefore the affliction is a pledge to us that He deals with us as His children; and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able (1 Cor. x. 13), but make us more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us (Rom. ix. 57); so that all things work together for good to them that love God, and love Zion, the city of God. (Phil. iii. 20; Gal. iv. 21—31.)

## 1.

Oft from my youth on me they’ve laid affliction,<sup>1</sup>

Oft from my youth on me affliction laid;

But never to my utter dereliction<sup>2</sup>

By God, may it by Israel be said!

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1. The afflictions of Israel in Canaan were provoked by Israel’s sins. (See Deut. xxxii. 30.)

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 2. Because of the Lord’s promise to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 17) the children of Israel shall never be utterly cast off. (See Jer. xxx. 10, 11.)

2.

Upon my back persistent plough'd the plougher,  
 Long time inflicting deep welts with the lash;  
 But in His righteousness it pleas'd Jehovah  
 The cords from out their ruthless<sup>a</sup> hands to dash.

3.

All shall be turn'd back, with confusion smarting,  
 Who against Zion settled hatred bear.  
 As grass shall they be on house-tops upstarting,  
 Which ere its bud bursts into bloom, is sere :

4.

Wherewith is never fill'd the hand of mower,  
 Nor arm of one that bindeth up a sheaf.  
 For whom none wish the blessing of Jehovah—  
 None in Jehovah's name good will conceive.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 4. Zech i. 15.

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PSALM CXXX.

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TITLE.

A Song of ascents.

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ARGUMENT.

In this short psalm are to be found sundry fundamental doctrines of God's way of salvation through Christ, and an exemplification of the way in which to bring them into use.

It will therefore be found upon enquiry to be in proportion to its brevity unusually full of matter for reflection. The writer at outset intimates, that he is in the extremity of distress from bodily or mental affliction, or both—prayer being what he has recourse to for relief. By the third verse he intimates, that his distress did not arise from any special burthen on his conscience.

It is rather intimated that like St. Paul in 1 Cor. iv. 4, "he knew nothing by himself, yet was he not hereby justified."

For the psalmist saith, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who shall stand?"

One doctrine here, by implication, set forth is, that there is none righteous, no not one. (Rom. iii. 10.) Hence, by implication, follows the statement of this other doctrine, that justification before God is by faith alone in God's promise concerning Christ, and not in any wise by man's works or deservings. (Compare Rom. iv. 2—12, and v. 1.)

For when the psalmist asks, "Who shall stand?" this phrase means, according to Scriptural usage, "stand in the judgment with God."

See Ps. i. 5 and 1 Cor. x. 12, where it is shewn that the believer stands by grace. Now the psalmist here prays, as one that stands; wherefore he in his own person maintains the doctrine that one who could not justify himself, if God were strict to mark offences, nevertheless doth stand justified; which he consequently must do by grace or favour, because of God forbearing from scrutiny of everything that is amiss in him. (Heb. vi. 13—20.)

Here now, by implication, is brought into use a third fundamental doctrine of God's plan of salvation; namely, that a penitent believer, who seeks grace from God, hath access unto Him—but how?

Let it now be observed, that the Book of Job is rightly held to have been composed before delivery of the Mosaic Law. And it contains evidence of God having revealed to His prophets that He had given fallen men One uniting in Himself the natures of either party at variance—God's and man's—to be "a days-man" (Job. ix. 33) between both—"a Redeemer" (xix. 25; "an Interpreter" along with God, "one among a thousand (as man) to shew unto man (under chastisement) God's uprightness" in so dealing with him. (xxxiii. 23.)

We hence see how early was revealed to man after what manner that "Seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head," was to be relied on for all that was needful for a penitent believer's acceptableness with God in prayer.

A fourth fundamental doctrine of God's plan of salvation is found in the fourth verse; where the psalmist added—

"But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."

The heathen satirist Horace truly observes—

"Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore,  
Oderunt peccare mali formidine pœnæ."

It is important therefore to note that the fear here spoken of by the psalmist is not that through dread of punishment; for it



is expressly said to be produced in the wrong-doer's mind by God's promise of forgiveness.

This therefore is the fear that springeth up in the trembling heart toward God out of love, with such strength as there might be in a bruised reed.

Our Saviour exemplifies God's manner of holding forth this forgiveness to a backslider's view, in His parable of the prodigal. (Luke xv. 11.)

The Father (from Whom comes every holy desire—without Whom no man can come to Christ, John vi. 44,) stirred in that backslider's heart, by occasion of his being at his wit's end for sustenance, the thought of relationship unto God as a Father (which he made his own by entertaining it, and acting on it), saying—

“How many hired servants of my FATHER have bread enough and to spare, while I perish with hunger.

“I will arise and go to my Father.”

Thus the hope of forgiveness with God led this prodigal to resolve on return, with becoming humility, in the frame of mind here displayed by the psalmist, to his Father, with the fear that comes of love—a fear that disposes one to use any means soever provided by revelation for one's use—that not only one may not grieve God afresh by carelessly sinning as before, but rather obtain, for asking, strength of heart wherewith to choose God's holy ways; so as to please Him thenceforward acceptably though not perfectly.

But prayer through the Advocate for “a new heart and right spirit,” was by revelation shewn to be the way for attainment to this state of reconciliation and newness of life. (Ps. li. 10.)

The psalmist here exemplifies the earnestness wherewith one waits on God in prayer who hath this fear, that comes through the persuasion of there being with God forgiveness. But the psalmist in shewing us the only way wherein God recovers any of us, with our own consent, out of a state of alienation from Him unto dutiful reverential love; at the same time shews how every one in authority over his fellow man, whether parent, master, or ruler, may alone hope to reclaim a transgressor. The exercise of punishment unrelieved by any hope of mercy, can only produce in our nature hatred or despair. Though punishment cannot be dispensed with, yet since it should ever be administered by us with a view to recovery of the chastened one to well-doing, the way of forgiveness should unceasingly be held forth, that there may be awakened in that wrongdoer, if God will, the fear that springeth up because of there being with one in authority the readiness to forgive. This is to deal with our fellow-sinners after the manner wherein God deals with us all.

Surely here is an important doctrine of the Gospel-plan of

salvation, wherewith every penitent believer is, like the repentant prodigal, experimentally conversant.

In the strength and light of the fundamental doctrines thus, by implication, shewn to be here used by the psalmist, he at the fifth verse redoubles his petitions, though not having at that time received the required answer; saying—

“I wait for the Lord—my soul doth wait—and in His word do I hope.”

Here is an important testimony to the ground whereon we rest for persuasion of these fundamental doctrines being really available for us.

We have the warrant of God’s word for them—His written word—as has been already shewn—that word which, when heaven and earth pass away, shall abide unchanged.

The earnestness of the psalmist is further testified in verse 6, by his adding—“My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning—that watch for the morning”—a reduplication shewing the stress laid by the speaker upon the thing contemplated: as in Gen. xxvii. 44, where Rebecca lulled her maternal apprehensions “for *her* son,” by fondly persuading herself that Jacob might withdraw to her family, in Padan-aram, “until his brother’s anger turn away—until his brother’s anger turn away.”

The psalmist is thought to compare himself here with the watchers employed by the officiating priests in the Temple at Jerusalem to give them notice of the first streaks of dawn, that they might prepare the morning sacrifice.

As these watchmen would naturally wish to be relieved of their task, they would long for tokens of dawn; and on this account seemed they fit to express the psalmist’s yearning for tokens of God’s favour in his deep distress—tokens which should be to his soul like morning after the darkness of night.

This mention of the watchmen appointed to give notice of the time for the morning sacrifice leads him to introduce (by implication) a fifth fundamental doctrine of God’s plan of salvation—to wit, the redemption through sacrifice; whereby indeed is opened the way for forgiveness of man consistently with Divine justice. (Rom. iii. 26.)

The psalmist also passes from solicitude for himself alone, to solicitude for all Israel; saying—

“Let Israel hope in Jehovah, for with Jehovah is mercy, yea with Him is plenteous redemption”—

how plenteous, we thankfully own who live after the fulfilment of what, the sacrifices of beasts in patriarchal times and under the Mosaic covenant prefigured on this head, in the sacrificial death of Christ at His crucifixion.

For as St. Paul testifies in Heb. ix. 13, “If the blood of bulls

and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through His Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

That the psalmist had hope of being himself purged to this extent, through God's plan of redemption, and not merely from ceremonial defilement, is plain from his testimony in verse 8—

"He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

The psalmist assuredly pointed at other than ceremonial defilements in the flesh, when asking in verse 3—

"If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who shall stand?"

he unquestionably had in his mind's eye heart-sins as well as outward ones in the flesh. (See Gen. vi. 5; 1 Kings viii. 38; Ps. li. 10.)

Consequently, to redeem Israel from *all* their iniquities, includes the "purging of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

Assuredly there is here brought within a small compass a cluster of fundamental doctrines concerning God's plan of salvation most valuable to be reflected on, and to be taken for a guide in the practical use of them.

This psalm may therefore be justly reckoned one of special importance, and eminently fitted to instruct us in enlightened use of prayer unto God out of a penitent heart—though knowing nothing against ourselves—without self-righteousness—through the only Advocate and propitiation for the children of God, according to 1 John ii. 1, 2.

1.

From depths of woe to Thee I cried,  
Jehovah! do Thou hear  
My voice, and to my prayer, O Lord,  
Yield an attentive ear.

2.

If Thou iniquities should'st mark,  
Jehovah! who, Lord, who  
Shall stand? but that Thou may'st be fear'd,  
With Thee's forgiveness too.

3.

I for Jehovah wait—my soul  
 Waits—hoping in His word.  
 As watchman waits for morn—for morn—  
 Wait I for Thee, O Lord!

4.

Let Israel in Jehovah hope :  
 A full redemption's His!  
 Yea He shall Israel redeem  
 From all iniquities !

PSALM CXXXI.

TITLE.

A Song of ascents of David.

ARGUMENT.

Short as is this psalm, there is in it much to engage attention. It contains an account of what constitutes evangelical humility. The parts hereof so given are:—

Firstly, a modest estimation of oneself in regard to capacity, mental and physical:

Secondly, a reverential fear of God :

Thirdly, a steadfast resolve to mind one's own business, and not to abandon one's proper calling, for the sake of meddling in matters devolving on others :

Fourthly, to despise no one, to envy no one :

Fifthly, to refrain from complaints against God when under chastisement (Gen. xxv. 22), and patiently to abide with Him under the affliction. (Luke xxii. 28, 29.)

This description of humility was eminently exemplified in David's early history.

Though in the prime of life made aware that God would advance him to the throne, we never find him elated by that favour, or bearing himself haughtily in consequence thereof. From the anointing by Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 13) he returned again to care of the flock, which was his calling.

Again, he is summoned from the sheepfold to the camp to prove himself the champion of his nation against Goliath, and after this triumph loyally became an attendant on the King.

Afterward, when undeservedly suspected and ill-used by Saul, he declined all idea of avenging himself in open rebellion—merely evading Saul's pursuit, and waiting patiently on God to fulfil His promise in His own time and way. But Jesus, the great Son of David, is the perfect exemplar of the humility here described. Though born King of the Jews, and sent to bear witness to the truth of God on this head (John xviii. 37), He nevertheless took not this honour unto Himself, but committed Himself unto His Father's hands, Who, He said, would judge righteously. In this spirit He paid tribute to the temple and to Cæsar (Matt. xvii. 25—27; xxii. 18—21.), lest He should give those who could not be expected to know the true grounds of His exemption from all taxes, an apparent warrant for thinking Him deficient either in piety towards God, or loyalty toward Cæsar. In this spirit He also at the marriage feast in the rich Pharisee's house (Luke xiv. 1—14) took the lowest vacant seat, with the modest remark, that there He would wait until the Giver of the marriage feast (here rising to the height of His own mystic marriage with His Church) should come to seek Him, and say, Friend, go up higher! whereupon would come in due course honour to Him "in the presence of them that should sit at meat with him!"

There is also to be perceived in this psalm, as De Burgh thinks, a prophetic notification of what shall be the mind and temper of the Israelitish remnant at the time of the Lord Jesus coming a second time to bless them (Heb. ix. 19, 20, compared with Acts vii. 13), as contrasted with that wherewith they rejected Him on His first coming. At that time pride, founded on self-righteousness, was the Jews' predominant characteristic. The Pharisee who went up with the publican unto the Temple to pray (Luke xviii. 9), and the elder son in the parable of the returning prodigal (Luke xv. 11—32.) were faithful pictures of the self-sufficiency of that people in general. But in the Israel that shall be chosen to receive the Lord's favour at His return a second time in the regeneration (Ps. lxxviii. 4), all will be changed.

Renouncing their boastful self-righteousness, their only hope will be that "with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption" (verse 7 of Ps. cxxx.), while the nation's emblem at that time will be a child—a weaned child—not one newly weaned, but, as the word denotes, effectually weaned—weaned from the flesh, and in utter renunciation of it brought into a state of simple child-like and unconditional dependence upon the Lord, and a quiet waiting for His salvation. This psalm so explained cannot be said to enjoin on us a profession



Nor lofty, O Jehovah, is my heart,  
 Nor lifted up mine eyes, nor matters great  
 Have I essayed—matters far apart  
 From me. Yea, count me worthy all men's hate,  
 If I've not sternly striven to abate  
 My spirit! Like unto a child distressed,  
 When from its mother wean'd, am I—  
 My soul is like a wean'd child in unrest,  
 Not doubting who shall all its need supply!  
 O Israel on Jehovah so rely  
 Now and henceforward everlastingly!

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PSALM CXXXII.

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TITLE.

A Song of ascents.

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ARGUMENT.

Sundry internal marks combine to indicate the late composition of this psalm: that is to say, in the interval between the carrying away of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser (2 Kings xvii.) and the two by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxiv.) Firstly, the opening words, "Lord, remember David and all his afflictions," sound as if the speaker referred in them to a long time previous. Secondly, the undoubted purpose of this psalm, was to set before the hearers reasons for coming up to worship the Lord before the ark in Zion; because of God having said that "He had chosen Zion for His habitation," verse 13. The psalm would therefore be well adapted to move that remnant of Israel, left in the inheritance of the ten tribes, to come up to worship the Lord in Jerusalem on the three great festivals.

For the Law said, that where God placed His name, there were they to assemble before Him in public worship. (Deut. xii. 5.)

Again, the author was clearly one who could speak as representative of the nation, and of David's line.

This is implied in the emphatic use of "we" in verse 6, as contrasted with "I" in the three verses next preceding, which

are affirmed of David. Also, that what he says in verse 10 favours this conclusion, that he was for the time then present, the anointed representative of David's line upon the throne of Judah; since the words, "Turn not away the face of thine anointed," are tantamount to "disappoint not Thine anointed king of David's line."

These considerations would warrant the conclusion that Josiah was the author of it; for he was a great reformer and zealous promoter of the worship of God by all Israel in Jerusalem. (2 Kings xxiii.) The question that he raises is, "where should be a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob?" (verse 5.)

This he decides at verse 13, by mentioning the Lord's favour toward Zion, where the ark then was.

But he argues this question with careful reference to what might be found in Scripture touching it, before coming to the conclusion specified. He begins with mentioning David's commendable earnestness about this subject.

We find it recorded in 2 Sam. vii. 1; but no mention occurs there of the earnestness wherewith David, after building his own house, set himself to find where might be a place for the Lord. This trait in David's character was handed down by tradition, and found a record in Scripture in this late stage of his descendant's continuance on the throne in Jerusalem. Assuming then that the transition from the first person singular in verses 3—5, to the first person plural in verses 6—7, marks a change in the speakers; and that "we" implies the language of the author, whom we have assumed to be Josiah; it seems to me that the psalmist, having testified to the importance of the inquiry, by citing David's example, proceeds in verse 6 to state what evidence there was in Scripture touching "a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

Here then he cites, first, as it seems to me, the more recently delivered testimony thereon; saying, with a perplexity implied in the word "heard," "Lo! we heard of it at Ephratah!"

That is, authoritative testimony has reached us on this head; but hard to be reconciled with the facts of the case.

In Gen. xxxv. 19, we see that Ephrath was Bethlehem; and in Micah v. 2, long after David's day, was a prophecy, that the expected Saviour should come in David's line out of Bethlehem.

It is plain that this prophecy gained at an early period such signal attention as is in keeping with that interpretation of Ephratah here adopted.

For by Matt. ii. we learn, that on the wise men from the East coming into Jerusalem, asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Herod peremptorily demanded of the rulers of the congregation, where Christ should be born? that is, in the words of verse 5, should have "a place and habitation?"



To this they replied, "In Bethlehem Ephratah," in reliance on that prophecy by Micah. Then indeed it became clear by the event, how the habitation of the God of Jacob might be in Bethlehem, although the ark (which was the visible symbol of God's presence in Israel, and as such, a type of that body-born of the Virgin, in which "the Word tabernacled when made flesh,") never had been at Bethlehem; nor was likely to be, as Josiah proceeded to argue, putting an emphatic contrast to "we heard" in "we found": in the former "we" testifying, as representative of David's line, to what the Scripture taught from Micah's day; and in the latter to what it taught in David's own day.

For when David had learnt from God the favour intended for him, of making him progenitor of Messiah, and placing the throne of Messiah in Zion (2 Sam. vii.), David then wished that the ark of God, which he had recently brought up "from the fields of Jear,"—verse 6, identical with Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. vii. 1, compared with 2 Sam. vi. 1.)—should not continue "under curtains," but have "a place and a habitation."

Josiah here sets David's location of the ark in Zion over against the perplexing testimony heard from Micah about His habitation at Bethlehem Ephratah. Here is to be seen the commendable dealing of the royal psalmist in this matter.

He would not keep back the testimony concerning the habitation of God at Ephratah, though it was his desire to bring all Israel to concur in worship before the ark in Zion. But he proposes to carry the perplexing question before the Lord, and on bended knees to inquire of Him concerning it before the ark.

The ark was in Israel the visible token of God's habitation among them. He was said to dwell between the cherubim (Ps. lxxx. 1.) and His feet rested on the lid of the ark, which was His footstool, and the mercy-seat. (Exod. xxvii. 9.) Thither were all Israelites to turn the face, when desiring to worship God. (Ps. v. 7; Dan. vi. 10.)

The psalmist then quotes for the purpose of worship, the very words used by his royal progenitor Solomon, at consecration of the temple. (2 Chron. vi. 41, 42, compared with verses 8—10.)

Having done this he quotes words out of Ps. lxxviii. 67—9, in proof of God's unalterable purpose to make Zion his habitation, coupled with words to the same effect from the more ancient testimony of Ps. lxxxix. 18—36, with which compare Isa. xxx. 18—26.

Thus this psalm appears to be strictly speaking a compilation from pre-existent materials, for the purpose of alluring the remnant of the ten tribes to join with the two that remained faithful to the house of David, in worship before the ark in Jerusalem.

Now what the psalmist was perplexed about, we in this advanced stage of the Church's progress, perceive to have been fully verified by God in the event.

By Matt. ii. we see, that though the ark was never taken to Bethlehem, that body of the Lord, which was His habitation, was born there; hence for a time He had His habitation at Ephraim—indeed, at first.

Also, by Acts xiii. 33, we learn, that when God raised Him from the dead in Zion, the words taught David in the second psalm, concerning God's favour for Zion as His habitation, were fulfilled by the birth of the Saviour there, from the grave; and not by His birth in Bethlehem, which would have made a discrepancy between the second psalm and Ps. lxxxv. 11, and lxxxvii. 5.

Thus far events have thrown light on what perplexed the royal author of this psalm. But Josiah, in keeping the apparently contradictory prophecies before his mind, and calling his hearers to join him in carrying them before the Lord in prayer, took the right way to be himself patient, as also to persuade his people to be patient in waiting for the only authoritative solution of this mystery; and at the same time to be by this inquiry lifted up in heart and mind to devout communion with God.

There still remain other prophecies relating to the habitation of God in Zion, no less perplexing than those which we have seen to be solved; and our duty is to imitate Josiah in carrying them in prayer before the Lord.

Wherefore, seeing that the body born of the Virgin, whereof the ark was type, was after crucifixion in Zion and resurrection there, carried up by Him glorified and spiritual into heaven unto the right hand of God, on the holy hill of Zion above (though He also placed His undivided flesh and blood, ere His departure, in the hearts of His disciples in the Zion on earth) it follows that we (whether out of Jews or Gentiles), who are of the only remnant of the true Israelites, by incorporation with Him in His mystical body, being of the sacrifice that He pleads above (Heb. x. 10.) should lift up our hearts to Him in heaven as our true mercy-seat.

Now whereas there is great difference of opinion among godly persons concerning the way in which the promise at close of this psalm, "upon Himself shall His crown flourish," in Zion, is to be understood, our duty is to wait upon the Lord for insight hereinto, on our knees before His footstool. In this way shall we neither be discouraged at the apparent irreconcilableness of promises by God on this head; nor shall we let them drop out of view: but like the royal psalmist at verse 7, fairly bring them forward, making them the subject of prayerful study.

The Lord Jesus Himself calls us to this occupation of ourselves with God's promises concerning Him, in Matt. xxii. 42; and we cannot have David's nor Josiah's godly desire for remembrance of God's presence among us, unless we take these appointed means of freshening our minds upon this subject.

By prayer we shall doubtless gain help to expect with unhesitating firmness, that He who was "born King of the Jews" (Matt. ii. 1.) and Who "was raised up from the dead to sit on David's throne," (Acts ii. 30.) assuredly will do so, for a shorter or longer time; seeing that since His resurrection He has never yet done so. (2 Tim. ii. 7—12.)

It is evident from this psalm, that to have an earnest desire for clear evidence to the presence of God with us on earth is one to which God calls us, by assigning promises on this head of an apparently contradictory nature for us to heed in patient expectation of His faithfulness.

1.

Thy servant David, O Jehovah, bear  
In mind—beneath what sorrows he was bow'd!  
How he in sooth unto Jehovah sware—  
Yea to the mighty God of Jacob vow'd—  
Full surely shall my feet not be allow'd  
My house<sup>1</sup> to enter, nor to mount upon,  
Its roof, that slumber should my vision cloud,  
Until Jehovah's place of rest be known—  
The dwelling-place of Jacob's mighty One.

2.

Of this a testimony reach'd our ear,  
Assigning Ephratah! but we can trace  
The ark with David from the fields of Jear.  
'Fore it let us, as they of old, upraise  
The song—"Jehovah, to Thy resting place  
Ascend Thou and Thine ark. Clothe Thy priests there  
With righteousness, fill too Thy saints with grace;  
And for Thy servant David's sake the prayer  
Of Thine anointed, O vouchsafe to hear!"

<sup>1</sup> Verse 3. By 2 Sam. vi. we learn that David had just finished his house, when he concerned himself, as here described, about an acceptable place for a house to the Lord, as recorded in the next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> David spake of "going up" to his bed, because it was on the roof of the house, as in 2 Sam. xi. 2.

## 3.

In truth to David hath Jehovah sworn,  
 Nor from it will He turn, upon the throne  
 Fruit will I set, that's of Thy body<sup>3</sup> born:  
 And if Thy children will my cov'nant own,  
 Their children too shall alway sit thereon.  
 For Zion hath Jehovah chose t'adorn  
 With His blest presence: there will He sit down  
 For all time then forthcoming: while return  
 The years of generations to be born.

## 4.

Her stores will I abundantly increase—  
 With wheaten bread her poor I'll satisfy—  
 Her priests too with salvation will I bless—  
 And all her saints make sing aloud for joy.  
 There shall the horn of David fructify,  
 Nor shall the lamp of Mine anointed cease  
 To shine there: thence His enemies shall fly,  
 But on Himself His crown grow lustily.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 11. See 2 Sam. vii. 12; Acts ii. 30. It hence follows that the blessed Virgin ought to have been of David's line, (as it is to be presumed she was) and not Joseph alone. So that the genealogies in Matthew and Luke are not both of them Joseph's; and Mary was not of the house of Aaron, though Elizabeth, her cousin, was.

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 PSALM CXXXIII.

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 TITLE.

A Song of ascents of David.

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## ARGUMENT.

That good and pleasant unity among brethren, referred to in this psalm, is that of brethren dwelling together in that house wherein Moses was a faithful servant, but Christ as the Son. (Numb. xii. 7; Heb. iii. 1—6.)

These all being begotten of one Father and daily renewed with the Spirit of Christ, in answer to their prayer for the same, are

new creatures in Him. (1 Sam. x. 12; Deut. xxix. 3, 4; Isa. xlv. 24, 25; xxvi. 12.)

The unction of this Spirit was typified by the precious ointment referred to in verse 2, appointed to anoint the High Priest in Israel.

In Exod. xxx. 22—30 is recorded how Moses received from God express directions touching the manufacture of this oil.

And in the thirty-third verse it is added, "whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people."

The very perfume of it therefore was intended to denote to the senses the holiness that is in the unity of Christ's mystical house or brotherhood. (John viii. 34—36.)

The diffusiveness of this and other fragrant oils is evidenced by their odour, which seems to me to be one particular at least wherein this holy ointment aptly represents the goodness and pleasantness of the unity among brethren in Christ. (2 Peter i. 4.) For just as oil poured out on the waves of the sea, while extending itself over a surprisingly large surface, is seen to maintain its continuity; so is it to be held to maintain its continuity, though unseen, wherever it diffuses its odour.

In this way it happily exemplifies the healing influence which unity among brethren hath on beholders. This, as it appears to me, is the sense in which the psalmist affirms that unity among Christ's brethren is like the precious ointment on the head that ran down upon the beard—even Aaron the High Priest's beard—and went down to the band on "the mouth" or orifice for the neck, that was in his ephod or priestly garment. (Exod. xxxix. 23.)

The psalmist next likens the goodness and pleasantness of this unity of brethren in Christ to the dew of Hermon; saying that it was—

"Like as the dew of Hermon that descended on Zion: for there the Lord commanded His blessing, even life for evermore."

Hermon is a mountain on the northern boundary of the Holy Land, 10,000 feet in height—the dews of which are by modern travellers found to be pre-eminently copious.

Mr. Maundrell says, that "with this dew even in dry weather, their tents were as wet as if it had rained the whole night." Now dew is in the dry climate of Palestine the great agent in nature for production of vegetation.

Hence we have Isaac, in Gen. xxvii. 28, when blessing Jacob, mentioning it.

Indeed, he combines the two similitudes of odour from holy ointment, and fertility through dew, that are here employed by the psalmist, to depict the blessedness of the unity of brethren in Christ.



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Firstly at verse 27, "he smelled the smell of Jacob's raiment" (who, it is to be remembered, had been clothed by Rebecca in the priestly robe which was supposed by Isaac, in the absence of any special command from God to the contrary, to be Esau's birthright).

These priestly garments were doubtless perfumed with an oil that was not applied to anything else of a common nature, and so was holy, like that above mentioned wherewith Moses anointed to the High-priesthood his brother Aaron.

"Isaac smelled his son's raiment and blessed him; and said; See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.

"Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine."

Dew, as I am inclined to think, is at Mount Hermon ordinarily produced by the exhalation of heated air from the earth at sundown, which is condensed into dew-drops on coming in contact with the rarefied air of the adjacent desert; which from evaporation has become colder than the earth.

If this be so, I can imagine that the lofty Hermon, with snow on its summits during a great portion of the year, so rapidly chills the air after sundown, that the heated vapour given out by the lower lands at the mountain's base is so much the more copiously condensed into dew—thus making the dew of Hermon proverbial.

But how is it that the psalmist should speak of the dew of Hermon descending on Zion, seventy miles off?

This greatly disconcerts commentators.

If the copiousness of dew at Mount Hermon has been above attributed to the right cause, then the dew on Zion would proportionably be much scantier; which is the case.

It is supposed in our authorised Version that the words "and as the dew" require to be inserted before speaking of what descended on Zion; in which case the extended outpouring of dew on the lofty Hermon and the lowly Zion might be taken to exemplify the extensively-spread influence which the unity of brethren in Christ has upon beholders, agreeably with our Saviour's prayer that all who should hear the word of His disciples and believe on Him through it, might be one in Him; that the world might believe, said He to His Father, "that Thou hast sent Me." So pleasing in the sight of the unconverted world would be the visible unity of all true Christians, that it would move the world to say, as it is recorded to have said in the time of the early persecutions, "Behold, how these Christians love one another!" But the conjecture strikes me of there being here a prophecy, that the dew of Zion shall one day be like that of Hermon, for the same reason.

The Jordan flows from the springs fed by the snows and

copious dews of Hermon : and we are told in Ezek. xl. 7, that on Mount Zion there will be a copious spring, like that of the Jordan, flowing from under the threshold of the New Temple, eastward, to heal the waters of the Dead Sea.

What, then, if this was to be brought about by natural causes similar to those which have been above supposed to produce the copious dews of Hermon, and the springs of Jordan? What if in the great disturbance of a volcanic nature, spoken of in Zech. xiv. 4, 5, about to take place at the appearance of the Lord with all His saints on the Mount of Olives to the remnant of the citizens of Jerusalem, Zion should be raised to a height corresponding to that of Hermon?

In that case the dews of Zion would obviously, because of proximity to the same desert, be as those of Hermon, without doing any violence to the psalmist's language.

The copious dew would also bring to that part of Palestine the fertility destined to characterise that country on the Lord's coming to reign over His people therein.

In Ps. lxviii. 15, the hill of God is sung of as "a high hill, even as the hill of Bashan," which was this very Hermon.

What, then, if this should be intended to be taken literally?

In that case all earthly blessings would combine with spiritual ones in Zion, "where the Lord commanded His blessing, even life for evermore."

Sundry commentators think that in this psalm attention is mainly pointed to the time when, as predicted in Isa. xi. 13, "the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." The world will then see brethren in one national Church dwelling together in unity, that they may believe the Lord Jesus hath indeed come from the only Lord God, and that beside Him there is no Saviour.

This blessed effect of the unity among the Lord's people upon the outer world ought surely to be constantly aimed at by them that believe and know the truth.

To promote this end they ought to have always in mind such forms of words as that of the Apostle to the Ephesians, vi. 24;—

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:—"

and as this in Heb. xii. 14;—

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord:—"

and that in Rom. xii. 18;—

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."



1.

Behold, how good a thing  
And pleasant 'tis to see  
Brethren together dwell  
In heartfelt unity.

2.

'Tis like the oil that down  
From Aaron's sacred head  
To beard and neck-band of  
His priestly garments spread.

3.

Or as when Hermon's dew  
Hath Zion settled o'er ;  
Where gifts<sup>1</sup> Jehovah bade—  
Yea life—be evermore !

<sup>1</sup> The union of all earthly with spiritual blessings, as here contemplated, for exemplification of the blessedness produced even now by unity, is entirely in accordance with the notifications in the Old Testament concerning Millennial happiness. James i. 17.

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PSALM CXXXIV.

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TITLE.

A Song of ascents.

There seems to me perceivable in this short psalm a clue to the meaning of the title.

Consisting, as it does, of salutations interchanged by two companies of watchmen in the temple at Jerusalem, there appears to me a loftier and more soaring style put in the mouth of the respondent.

Assuredly for the Lord to bless us, according to the third verse,

is a far more weighty thought than that in the second verse, of our blessing the Lord.

And again the Lord's blessing out of Zion in verse 3 transcends that wherewith He had even then endued (according to the 1st and 2nd verses) those that under the Mosaic Covenant stood in the temple at Jerusalem lifting up hands in holiness.

Again, a third instance, as I am inclined to think, of a loftier expression in verse 3 than in verses 1 and 2 is in the use of the personal pronoun *thee* in the singular number instead of the plural, as in the verses preceding—although the interchange of salutations is supposed to be made by two companies of watchmen: so that, at first sight, it might have been expected that the plural pronoun would have been as appropriate in the response as in the address. But blessings from the Lord are of many kinds, as well for this life, as for that to come—as well for the congregation in its corporate capacity, as for each member thereof individually.

Now it seems to me that these blessings are in the 1st and 2nd verses spoken of and ascribed to God as their Author by the worshippers in their corporate capacity; but in the 3rd verse as to be looked for from God by each in his individual capacity; the former imply that the congregation to which you belong is a living branch of Christ's Spirit—the latter that each worshipper, who with living faith makes the Spirit of Christ his own by reverent use of it when at his disposal, is a lively member of that congregation:

This sort of *Amœbeum carmen* perhaps had its origin among Hebrew poets: for undoubtedly the earliest specimens of it are to be found in the book before us: and a poem of this structure manifestly suits the intellectual character of the Hebrew poetry. For it seems to me that all its measures are those of the thoughts—and not of the words in which the thoughts were clothed; but instances of the *amœbeum carmen* are met with in Virgil and Horace. And it seems to me there is in our Church's morning service an instance of it, unquestionably of great antiquity. It occurs immediately after recital of the Apostles' Creed, and preceding what is entitled the shorter Litany.

The minister addresses to the congregation "The Lord be with you," whereto they shall reply, "And with thy spirit:" the meaning being, that, whereas (according to Ephes. iv. 15, 16) Christ the Head supplies through the bishop and his presbyters, as joints and bands, measures of His Spirit unto their congregations in public worship; while the minister, for his part, exhorts the congregation so to pray, as that God the Father may be pleased with their service; they intelligently make reply to their minister, that with the Spirit of Christ in them derived through him as a band, they recollect how he and they are to make that Spirit their own: so that when it shall come up from them unto the

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presence of God to be presented by the High Priest (Ps. cxix. 169, and cl. 6), it may bear many articulate expressions whereby each has severally made it his own!

These psalms, so explained, justify their title of "Songs of ascents."

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### ARGUMENT.

From internal evidence it may be gathered that this psalm was composed for use of the Levitical companies relieving each other as guards of the temple during the night.

The Hebrews divided their night into four watches of three hours each, counting from sun-down at six o'clock to sun-rise at six o'clock. (Mark xiii. 35.)

We suppose then the company leaving off guard at six o'clock at even, to have been required by this psalm to greet the detachment taking their place with the words of the first two verses.

Whereupon that company cordially should reply, in the terms of verse 3.

The first two verses are—

"Behold! or beware! bless ye the Lord—all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands of holiness, and bless the Lord!"

Whereto the guards then entering on duty should reply according to the 3rd verse—

"The Lord that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion!"

The words of the first and second verse uttered from the heart by the Levites leaving off guard would imply, that far from being tired of their office, and looking for dismissal, they were at completion of their allotted hours jealous of God's honour, and provocative of zeal on the part of their comrades, who should succeed them in that good work.

To "lift up hands of holiness" is so close a resemblance of St. Paul's words in 1 Tim. ii. 8, that he may be thought to have there quoted the words of this second verse. The exhortation in these first two verses directly tended to admonish the Levitical guard, that the duty on which they were about to enter, being in the temple of the Lord, was not to be discharged like that of ordinary sentinels in a merely perfunctory manner—by bodily service alone—but as became a holy God with the lifting up of holy hands, and with the mind's thoughts.

The reply provided in the 3rd verse, for the detachment then commencing duty, calls on them to meet this appeal with warmer terms of pious devotedness; inasmuch as they let their departing comrades know how great they hold the Lord of that temple to be—even the Maker of heaven and earth—Who also hath

promised blessings to Israel in Zion, which shall sum up all that man can desire. See the 3rd verse of the preceding psalm, and the last six verses of the psalm before that, and the language of the eighty-seventh psalm at verses 5—7: where it is promised, that Messiah should be born there; which happened when He was raised up there from the grave. Compare Isa. xxviii. 16, Acts xiii. 33: whence it is plain that to bless one out of Zion was an expression in that day betokening all the blessings hitherto granted mankind in Jesus through the Jews or yet to be granted. (John iv. 22.)

Such blessings we know can only be made by each one to be his own through lively faith: wherewith, in answer to prayer in the name of Jesus, he may obtain of the Father renewal with the Holy Ghost from day to day.

These are pre-eminently the blessings, wherewith the Lord maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow therewith (Prov. x. 22): whence may be seen how the terms of this 3rd verse on the subject of blessing transcend those of the first and second. Man's blessing, at most, can but consist in his speaking good of God's Name: whereas God's blessing of the believers is not so much an enduing of him "with word, as with power and with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance." (1 Thess. i. 5.)

This psalm, so explained, shews it to be an incentive to the worship of God in His temple at Jerusalem by night as well as by day. (1 Chron. ix. 33.)

The worship in heaven is unquestionably in that manner, by turns or relays, without ceasing. (Rev. iv. 8.)

Moreover the tabernacle built by Moses for the Levitical worship was intended for a pattern of that in heaven (Heb. viii. 5), as was also the temple of Solomon.

Nor need we doubt but that when "Our God hath come out of Zion perfect in beauty" (Ps. l. 2, Heb. xii. 23), a service, day and night, according to the tenour of the hundred and thirty-fourth psalm, will be offered up in the Temple then to be erected.

An attempt has however been made by the Church of Rome to inaugurate such an unceasing public worship of God in this age of the Christian Church, by institution of courses of regular priests and nuns in monasteries.

But there is a wide difference to be observed between the circumstances in which the Israelitish nation was placed when required to render this service after the pattern of that in heaven (and shall as we believe be again required to do in the forthcoming age), and the circumstances in which, we of this age in the kingdom of heaven out of various nations that believe in God, are situate.

In Israel an entire tribe, numbering 38,000 males in David's day (1 Chron. xxiii. 3—5), was set apart for this national service in one house, by courses.

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Whereas now, during the present age in the kingdom of heaven, the hour is come when the true worshippers, blessed out of Zion by the Lord that made heaven and earth, no more are gathered unto one place (John iv. 21), nor yet have any adequate portion of their nation authoritatively set apart for such service by courses.

Is it then to be concluded that no way is left us of this age in which to act up to the spirit of the exhortation in this psalm to bless God?

We read in John iv. 24 that they who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth:

In Acts x. 35 also we read, "that He is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him:"

And St. Paul, in 1 Tim. ii. 8, will have "men pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting—*i.e.* in faith and charity:" he would also have us (according to 1 Thess. v. 17) "Pray without ceasing:" also in 1 Cor. vi. 19 he asks, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God?"

It is therefore to be hence gathered, that, as spiritual priests, having access unto the holy place of the great temple of the universe, (which Peter shews to be "the blessing of the Lord out of Zion" in our day, 1 Peter ii. 1—9) we are habitually to bless our God day and night in whatsoever we do. (Col. iii. 17.) To serve God in such a spirit, "considering one another to provoke unto love and unto good works," (Heb. x. 24), is practicable according to the grace given us in our age of the kingdom of heaven, and a personal though not a corporate exemplification of the service rendered day and night in heaven. How eminently happy would that congregation among us be wherein the older members that had reached the evening of life and the end of their pilgrimage might say to the younger ones, according to the first two verses of this psalm, Take heed and see that in this dark world ye be as lights to the glory of the Lord—while they with cordiality bid their departing elders, in the words of the last verse, look for the fulness of blessing from the Lord that made heaven and earth in the Zion above.

### THE WARDERS' CHALLENGE.

Ho ! ye, Jehovah's servants all, beware !  
Jehovah bless !

Standing by night within the house of prayer,  
Jehovah bless !

Unto Jehovah lift up hands devout  
In holiness !

THE WARDERS' REPLY.

Jehovah, heav'n's and earth's Lord, thee from out  
Of Zion bless !

PSALM CXXXV.

ARGUMENT.

Israel's praise of God may be described as being a vocal and intelligent utterance of that commendation which all God's works by their very appearance yield Him.

Holy Scripture teaches us that God inhabiteth the praises of Israel. (Ps. xxii. 3.) This is so, because He Himself first must open our lips, before our mouths can intelligently shew forth His praise. (Ps. li. 15; 1 Cor. xii. 3.)

This He doth by first, in answer to His people's prayers for a measure of the Spirit of Christ, infusing the same into their hearts. Hereupon it rises to their lips in praises. Nevertheless there is great difference between one and another in use of this Spirit when infused into them.

Few comparatively enrich their minds with study of God's works and word, in order that they may stir up the gift that is in them, and abound in the fruit of the lips.

A large proportion of those that receive of Christ's Spirit are desultory and vacillating in employment of it for the purpose of praise; and not a few, it is to be feared, omit altogether the duty of rendering praise according to that measure of the Spirit received by them (2 Chron. xxxii. 25); whereupon it departs out of their heart, along with the words of Christ (Deut. iv. 9), and they relapse into their unrenewed state of mind. (Matt. xii. 43-45; Gal. v. 4.) The gift of a measure of the Spirit of Christ in answer to one's prayer for it, lays one under the obligation to use it to God's glory: but this worthy use of it is only rendered by help of God's grace; as St. Paul admonishes us when writing in Rom. xii. 6—

“Having then gifts differing, or excelling, according to the grace given unto us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of the faith,” and so forth.

## 250 PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIFTH.

Those of God's children who examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, are constrained to lament their inaptitude for topics whereon to praise God.

Notwithstanding that the Spirit of Christ is in their hearts, if they begin God's praise, they soon find themselves coming to the end of what they have to say in that strain, being in this respect the very opposite to Elihu, who stood up on God's behalf to reprove both Job's friends and Job; whom we find saying at chap. xxxii. 18—

“I am full of matter, the Spirit within me constraineth me.

“Behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst, like new (skin) bottles.”

Elihu could not have been full of matter, though having the Spirit of Christ within him, unless he had been in the habit of storing his mind with the countless tokens of God's worthiness to be seen in the works of His hands. This it was which made him, though the younger, so able to speak on God's behalf in that grave assembly of elders.

It is therefore lack of this diligent study, which causes those among us, who have a measure of the Spirit of Christ, to be soon at a loss and emptied out in our attempts at rendering praise to God, according to that we have received.

We ought to bear more in mind than we do, that “gifts excel according to grace,” and that grace is gained by diligence in waiting on God for it. Granting, then, that we own this view of duties and defects to be sound, psalms like this hundred and thirty-fifth become valuable as examples of the way how to set about the exercise of praise.

On seeing how the psalmist, guided by the Spirit of Christ, found themes for praise of God in that early stage of the progress of Israel, we may soon see that in addition to those themes, we Christians have many more to recite, in which, upon opportunity, we ought to be fitted to praise God aloud and long.

In the first two verses it is shewn how all servants of the Lord are under an obligation to do this, but especially His ministers.

For, as man by being endowed with reason and speech is fitted by God to lead with intelligent language the chorus of praise rendered to Him by all creation at its very sight; so, the ministers of His sanctuary are appointed to be their fellowmen's prompters and helpers herein.

In the 3rd verse the psalmist alleges the goodness of the Lord to be an inexhaustible incentive to praise. He also adds, that the ascription of praise unto God is pleasant to the minds so employing themselves.

Of this there cannot be a doubt.

For, whereas it is impossible to look at a beautiful object, and to discourse of its beauty, without becoming enlivened, which is

pleasant; so they that have the Spirit of Christ in them need only to begin to dwell on the goodness of God, discernible in His works of creation—or, again, in those of redemption—to be recovered from despondency, like Hagar's in the wilderness (Gen. xxi. 16, 17); or sullenness, like David's, when the Lord smote Uzzah. (2 Sam. vi. 8.)

In the 4th verse the psalmist specifies a prime reason with all Israelites for readiness to praise God; namely, "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure."

Now it is thought that this psalm was written after Judah's return from the captivity in Babylon, about the time described in Nehemiah ix.; which was a time with them of comparative straitness and feebleness, though abounding with tokens of God's returning favour. Here the psalmist shews his aptitude for praise of God by putting in the foreground this token of God's special goodness to Israel above all nations (though with a view to the good of them all); by going so far back as the nineteenth chapter of Exodus, where, at verse 5, it was written—

"If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

Now "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

He will not allow His calling to become utterly inoperative, though the time may be long deferred in which He has fore-determined to delay no longer, on account of His servants' perverseness in abuse of His gifts, the establishment of that destined favour in full operation. Such seems to be the ground taken in this psalm for praising God, notwithstanding the slender circumstances in which the psalmist's countrymen, as a nation, were situate in Nehemiah's day. First of all it is intimated that God had the *power* to bring that good purpose of His toward Israel into operation. If He would, He could, "make them a peculiar treasure unto Him, and a holy nation." (Matt. viii. 2.)

This the psalmist proves by shewing, from the 5th verse to the end of the 12th, that "the Lord doth whatsoever it pleaseth Him," (which the false gods of the nations cannot) as well in heaven by giving rain (which no gods of the nations can, Jer. x.), as on earth by what He did for destruction of the mightiest empire thereon, at the time when He would bring Israel out of Egypt.

Again, in the 13th and 14th verses, where the psalmist saith—

"Thy Name, O Lord, endureth for ever, and Thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations.

"For the Lord will judge His people, and He will repent Himself concerning His servants,"

he reminds his fellow-worshippers that the Lord is as *willing* as



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He is able to fulfil His promise to make Israel a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation ; although, because of the unprofitableness of one generation after another among them, He may leave them, as they then were, in great straits. The time will come, though the promise seems long delayed, when it shall be with the Lord an occasion, as it were, of regret that it has been so long withheld : and He will "by judgment" (Isa. i. 27) make Israel His peculiar treasure.

Surely the psalmist hereby gave his fellow-worshippers good ground for praise of God ; so as to kindle in them sparks of grateful thought about what they ought to do for God's glory, above what heathens did for their false gods.

The heathen, as the psalmist points out, gave the best they had—silver and gold—to their false gods for idols ; how then ought Israelites to give their gold and silver to the service of the true God, Who had opened their eyes, as idols could not, to see the folly of worshipping senseless lumps of matter, or the devils such lumps were meant to represent. (1 Cor. x. 20.)

Oh that these words of the psalmist might kindle in us warm resolves not to grudge our silver and gold to the service of the true God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, that His way may be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations.

### 1.

#### Hallelujah.

Praise ye Jehovah's name,  
His excellence proclaim,  
Ye servants of Jehovah ! ye that wait  
Within His dread abode—  
The chambers of our God—  
Your voices in His worship elevate.  
Good is Jehovah ! praise be to His name !  
And truly pleasant 'tis, to think upon the same.

### 2.

Jehovah, ages gone,  
Chose Jacob for His own—  
For His especial treasure Israel.  
Jehovah, well know I,  
Doth all the gods on high  
Or on the earth beyond compare excel.  
All hath Jehovah wrought, it did Him please,  
In heaven, earth, and all deep places, and the seas.

3.

From earth's apparent end  
 Makes He mists to ascend,  
 Or after lightnings brings down floods of rain :  
 Or bids the winds to fly  
 Forth from His treasury.  
 The eldest-born of man and beast lay slain,  
 When He in wrath sent tokens to thy cost,  
 O Egypt, upon Pharaoh and on all his host.

4.

Great nations He o'erthrew,  
 And mighty despots slew—  
 The valiant Sihon, King of Amorites,  
 And huge Og—Bashan's head—  
 Famed for his iron bed,  
 And all the kingdoms of the Canaanites,  
 And gave their lands as He did first engage,  
 To Israel—His people—for a heritage.

5.

Jehovah, Thy great name,  
 Abides always the same ;  
 And Thy memorial through every age !  
 Jehovah unto Him  
 With judgment shall redeem  
 His people, granting all He e'er did pledge ;  
 As idols made of silver or of gold  
 Cannot, whereon the heathen lavish wealth untold ;

6.

Whose mouths devoid of speech,  
 And sightless eyeballs, teach  
 Mankind to deem, who trust in them, as they.  
 O house of Israel,  
 Jehovah's praises tell !  
 O house of Aaron, how ye love Him, say !  
 Levites, and all that fear Him, swell this theme !  
 O Zion, Him bless, dwelling in Jerusalem !  
 Hallelujah !

## PSALM CXXXVI.

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ARGUMENT.

The subject of this psalm is closely akin to that of the psalm preceding: there God's people are stirred up to praise of Him—here to giving of Him thanks; which may be regarded as marking off a special part of the more general topics for praise of God. Praise may have for its subject what God is in Himself; whereas thanksgiving treats in eulogistic terms of what He is to us fallen men. In Rom. v. 7, St. Paul shews how much more loveable it is to be good than to be righteous: saying, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man (one doing kindnesses as well as righteousness) some would even endure to die;

"But God commendeth *His* love (or goodness) towards us, in that while we were yet *sinners* Christ died for us."

There was doubtless in the psalm before us a mysterious reference to this crowning instance of God's goodness; as will appear more plainly when we come to consider what is here said of His mercy—to wit, that it endureth for ever.

From St. Paul's words above quoted may be seen how the goodness of Jesus in dying for us sinners is God's own goodness to us: which enables us to reconcile two testimonies in holy Scripture apparently contradictory—one in Mark x. 18, where it is written that Jesus said, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good, but One; that is, God." The other in Micah vi. 8, where it is written, "He, namely God, hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, or that good One, Who is worthy to make peace with God on man's behalf: so that God doth not require of thee, O man, to make thy peace with Him—it is already made; but God *doth* require of thee to do justly (by faith in the sufficiency of that good One to make peace for thee) and to love mercy," out of which God gave thee that good One, "and to walk humbly with thy God."

There is no contradiction between that saying of Jesus, "There is none good but One; that is, God," and Micah's—"God hath shewed thee, O man, Him Who is good"—the man not only righteous, but out of love "giving His life a ransom for us sinners"—"Jesus and His Father are one." (John x. 30; xiv. 9—13.)

The words "for His mercy is, or *endureth*, for ever," explicitly testify that whereinsoever God had, prior to the time for composition of this psalm, manifested His goodness to Israel, it was of His merey alone that He did this: as also was the case

whereinsoever He was at the time then present shewing it, and would be, whenever hereafter He should shew it.

Now in 1 Chron. xvi. 41, it is written that King David specially charged the choir "to give thanks to the Lord, before the ark in Zion, because His mercy endureth for ever."

Also in 2 Chron. v. 13, it is recorded how at the consecration of Solomon's temple upon the choir singing with music in praise of the Lord;

"For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever," that then the house was filled with a cloud—even the house of the Lord;

"So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

Also in the twentieth of 2 Chron. where is recorded how Jehoshaphat gathered an army to repel an invader, at verse 21 it is written, he marched to the combat with the singers singing before the army, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever;" and the invaders were smitten before them—none escaped.

Such singling out of one attribute of God for especial praise with His manifest approval, may surely be considered to have had for its warrant some oracular word from Himself.

Now in the eighty-ninth psalm, which is justly held to be as old as any part of our present Scriptures, being the work of Ethan the Ezrahite in the journeying through the wilderness, we have in the second verse a solemn asseveration by Christ in the person of the psalmist, to this effect—"I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever, Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens." After which follows the Father's testimony concerning His covenant with His chosen—His David or beloved—His servant.

Assuredly this ancient Scripture may be regarded as the precedent to which David—himself a type of the promised Messiah, both by name and office—had respect; when singling out of all God's glorious attributes, that of His mercy, for the especial theme of praise; because of His purpose to send the beloved One—His King and Servant—of His mercy to accomplish all His will concerning us fallen men—all His goodness.

Owing to the fact of this ancient Scripture in the eighty-ninth psalm containing God's own pledge concerning His purpose of exalting mercy above all His attributes in His dealings with man, is, as it seems to me, to be attributed the coupling of mercy and truth so emphatically in sundry places of the psalms and in the book of Proverbs; as, for instance, in Prov. iii. 3, where we read, "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee;" and in xvi. 6, where we read, "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged;" where it ought to be plain that poor fallen man doe

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not purge himself of his own iniquity by subsequent acts of mercy and truth, so far as he can offer them ; but that the same "mercy and truth" which in the third chapter, verse 3, we are charged to beware of provoking to forsake us, are the Divine attributes by exercise whereof God purges man from iniquity ; because of His having placed mercy in the ascendant, even in heaven itself ; according to the second verse of Ps. lxxxix : so that "mercy shall rejoice against judgment," James ii. 13. Hence in Ps. lxxxv. we find it testified "mercy and truth are met together ;" because of truth flourishing out of the earth in the Person of the risen Saviour, after He had been laid as a foundation stone in Zion.

Also in Matt. ix. 13 we find the Lord Jesus, when on earth, pursuing the same line of thought which we have shewn Him in His Divine nature to have spoken by the mouths of His prophets—when saying, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." (Hosea vi. 6.)

This tracing back of the exaltation of Divine mercy above all the other attributes to God Himself, when speaking concerning His David—or beloved—in Ethan's psalm, at verse 3, shews that what Isaiah was taught by inspiration to call "the sure mercies of David," reached backward beyond the covenant confirmed with David, as recorded in 2 Sam. vii. 11—16, to that mentioned in Ps. lxxxix. 3.

If the foregoing remarks convey but a fair and unexaggerated exposition of the words—

"O give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good ; for His mercy endureth for ever."

How enchanting appears the conception of making every verse in this psalm end with the same words—as a slaking of the worshipper's thirst for praise of God by frequent exaltation of that attribute which God Himself would, out of goodness towards fallen man, exalt in the very heavens !

In the second verse where we read—

"O give thanks unto the God of gods, for His mercy endureth for ever,"—

we are to understand by gods—not only those on earth among men most worthy by their office to be revered, to whom God in Scripture conceded in a subordinate sense some of the honour belonging to His own name (Exod. vii. 1) ; but the highest of His creatures, the archangels that excel in strength ; (Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7.) so that, as Nebuchadnezzar becomingly confessed in Dan. iv. 37, "those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

"The God, that made these gods, can make His sword to approach unto them." (Job xl. 19.)

This is what is meant by our being asked to praise the Lord as

God of gods because His mercy endureth for ever: it being in effect a solemn record of His people's persuasion that "neither heighth nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us who, though fallen beings, are the objects of His mercy, from His love toward us in Christ Jesus the Lord." (Rom. viii. 39.)

To the like effect is the significance of the third verse—

"O give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His mercy endureth for ever."

In the fourth verse, where the psalmist saith—

"To Him (give thanks) Who alone doeth great wonders, for His mercy endureth for ever."

All power is ascribed to God alone, which from the fifth to the end of the ninth verse is exemplified on the one hand, in such works of creation as His making of the heavens—and stretching out the earth against<sup>1</sup> the waters—and making the luminaries of heaven to give light upon the earth by day and by night:

And on the other, from the sixth to the twenty-second, in His personal interposition by extraordinary agencies for liberation of His chosen people Israel out of Egypt—dividing the Red Sea into parts<sup>2</sup> for their sakes—and bringing His people through the

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 6. עֲלֵה־מַיִם "against" is a sense of 'at,' as it seems to me, in Ps. cix. 6, and Ps. lxxxi. 5, see margin; where I understand by it 'over against.' (Job xxxviii. 10, 11.)

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 13. לְנָחִירִים "into parts." On this expression the rabbis have a tradition, that it denotes the division of the waters of the Red Sea, so as to afford twelve distinct ways, whereby the twelve tribes should pass through its depths.

So far from discrediting this tradition, it seems to me very unlikely to have arisen in the mind, had there not been in reality an origin for it. The discipline observed in the vast host of 600,000 men, beside women and children and cattle, seems to me to be here disclosed; as also the order in which they were drawn up on the sea-shore; so as to be ready to pass through at a given breadth.

Moreover, if the water was turned into ice between each of the tribes (Exod. xv. 8), it becomes apparent how distinctness of each was maintained during the passage through the bottom of the sea; as also how the ice on being melted caused the Egyptians to be simultaneously in the midst of the sea.

This and certain other particulars in this psalm incline me to think, that we have here one composed at an early date.

The references to Ps. xxxix., which I have already endeavoured to identify in commencement of my observations, corroborate this conjecture.

The occurrence of לִישׁוּאֵל עֲבָדֶי in verse 22, seems to me a reference to עֲבָדָי in verse 3 of Ps. lxxxix.: looking on Israel collectively as mystically one with "the beloved." (Compare Isa. lxix. 3.)

Again, the prefix of לְ to the object of verbs active in verses 16, 17, 19 and 20, as three times in verse 11 of Ps. cxxxv. is to be met with in 2 Sam. iii. 30; Job v. 2.)

Also the prefix שׁ for אֶשֶׁר in verse 23 is to be met with in Judges v. 7; vii. 12; viii. 26.

wilderness into Canaan; and again, by mercifully remembering them in their low estate, when in the times of the Judges they had provoked Him to sell them into the hands of one enemy after another: and to sum up all, by His giving of food to all flesh, whereby their life is sustained from day to day: since, as Elihu saith in Job xxxiv. 14—

“If He set His heart upon Him,” that is, retire within Himself—if He gather unto Himself His Spirit and His breath—“all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again into dust.”

Whence it is clear, that “of His mercy we are not consumed.” (Lam. iii. 22.)

Such is the help to render thanksgivings unto our God provided for us in this noble hymn, and we need much to study it and take it for a model of thanksgiving; notwithstanding that we—who at this day—are of the only remnant of the true Israelites, have many more acts of mercy towards us to record at this late stage in the progress of His Church, which have been wrought for Israel by Him Who alone doeth great wonders. For there is risen up among us a school of enquirers into the works of God in the material universe which ignores all that holy Scripture teaches us concerning the fall of man; and consequently neither supposes man to be an object of God's mercy, nor to need it. The more conspicuous these free-thinkers are for their perverted ability, the more diligent ought those that know His Name to be in rendering Him thanks for His mercy.

We owe this to God as well on behalf of our Church collectively (which includes us all in our national capacity,) as on our own behalf individually; for is not the Lord He “Who hath fed us all our life long, the Angel, that hath redeemed us from all evil?” (Gen. xlviii. 15.)

Is not His Personal interposition in answer to our prayers manifested to us in ways known only to ourselves, and Him; wherein we have asked Him to hold our souls in life, and not to suffer our feet to be moved? (Ps. lxvi. 9.) How, then, can we do otherwise than take shame to ourselves, if backward in rendering Him thanks for all His mercies unto us as well individually, as also in our corporate capacity, being congregations of worshippers united with Him, Who is our Covenant Head, in His mystical body! (Ephes. iv. 15, 16.)

This thankfulness unto God is comely and pleasant, and without doubt as acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, as it was in David's day or Solomon's or Jehoshaphat's; because it is for our good and great profit to concern ourselves about God's honour, that we may be partakers of His Holiness. (John xv. 8; 1 Sam. xi. 30.)

To Jehovah, alone good, give thanks,  
 For His mercy endures evermore—  
 The God over gods of all ranks—  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 Unto Him Who of lords is the Lord,  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 Who's alone for His works to b'ador'd,  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 By His wisdom the heavens Who made,  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 The land 'gainst the waters Who laid,  
 For His mercy endures evermore!  
 To Him that great lights did display,  
 For His mercy endures evermore—  
 The Sun to preside over day,  
 For His mercy endures evermore; [sway;  
 While o'er night moon and stars should bear  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 The first-born of Egypt Who smote,  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 And Israel out from thence brought,  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 With a strong hand and arm stretched out,  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 And clave through the Red Sea a route;  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 And Israel made to pass through,  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 But Pharaoh's host in it o'erthrew,  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 Through the desert His people Who brought,  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 And for them against mighty kings fought,  
 For His mercy endures evermore;  
 Yea famous kings 'neath them did fling,  
 For His mercy endures evermore—  
 Great Sihon, of Amorites king,  
 For His mercy endures evermore—



With Bashan's king—Og—huge and brave—  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 And their land as a heritage gave,  
 For His mercy endures evermore—  
 When Israel th' heathen thence drave ;  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 Who lifted us up when brought low,  
 For His mercy endures evermore ;  
 And rescu'd us from every foe,  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 It is He that to all flesh gives food,  
 For His mercy endures evermore.  
 Heav'n's God thank, Who only is good,  
 For His mercy endures evermore.

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## PSALM CXXXVII.

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### ARGUMENT.

From the tenour of the third verse it is plain that "the songs of Zion" were in a lively and cheerful strain.

The themes of such songs we may suppose to have been, either the beauty of the situation of Zion (Ps. xlviii.), or the gladness of those who lived in that one place on earth, where God had manifested the visible tokens of His presence, and worshipped Him there with a good conscience.

When we think of the discordant sounds which to this day characterise what heathen nations call music, we may well incline to the persuasion that the praise of God with music, vocal and instrumental, in the service of the Tabernacle, being originally derived from heaven, was unique on earth.

We may also be well persuaded that this heaven-descended music was so in accordance with the principles of harmony in man's constitution, that the majority of the heathen who heard it were delighted with it.

Now from this third verse we learn that the Babylonians, who had carried away the Jews from Jerusalem, after destruction of their city and temple, used to ask their captives to sing those songs. It is expressly stated, that it was for the

sake of the mirthful measure of those songs that the Babylonians wished to hear them ; and it was on this very account that the captives could not bring themselves in their distress to comply with that request.

Surely here is an affecting token of the gladness which God would have associated with His service.

It has been truly remarked that none have so good a right to be cheerful as those who know the joyful sound of the Gospel of God, and live in conscientious observance of it.

Their cheerfulness recommends their religion to the notice of strangers. For all men are in search of happiness ; and when they see devout worshippers of the God of Israel taking heartfelt pleasure in His service, they rightly reckon the source of that happiness to be in their religion.

But in the case of the Babylonians described in this psalm, more is not said than that they asked their captives to sing for them, with accompaniment on the harp, those mirthful songs of Zion. The captives to whom this request was made being, as we may suppose, Levites that once had conducted the service of God in His temple, felt that in their altered circumstances the mirthfulness of those songs cut them to the heart ; so that, however much they might wish, in the hope of their better treatment, to please their conquerors, they could not in this matter indulge them.

These Levites apparently felt it to be only the fault of their own nation that they were not then in their own land, entering into the spirit of that mirth to the utmost of their capacity.

The service of their God called for such gladness on the part of His faithful servants ; but alas ! they and their fellow-countrymen had not been faithful : they had together sinned (Dan. ix. 8) to the degree which had provoked their God to appoint the overthrow of His city and temple, with the captivity of His people in Babylon for seventy years.

Hence the very mirthfulness of the Songs of Zion smote them with poignant compunction.

Commentators are at a loss to account for the mention in the first verse of the captive mourners being by the rivers of Babylon.

But it is to be observed in Acts xvi. 13, that descendants of this same people, when under Roman masters, "went out of the city of Philippi on the Sabbath, by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made."

In that instance the situation was evidently a self-chosen one, having probably privacy for its recommendation. May it not then seem reasonable to conjecture, that those Jews at Philippi derived their custom from their forefathers under like circumstances—knowing, as we do, how unchanging are Asiatic habits ?

Viewing then this psalm as representing the more pious cap-

tives to have retired for worship on the Sabbath to a secluded space on the swampy banks of the Euphrates, where willows plentifully grew, may we not suppose the author of this psalm to describe their hearts' thoughts when withdrawn thither for worship from the throng and clamour of the neighbouring city? (See too Dan. viii. 2 and 16; also x. 4). Accordingly we suppose them to have been in unmolested privacy when saying—

“By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down, yea we wept; when we remembered thee, O Zion.

“We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.”

Assuredly the psalmist here makes these Jews speak as though well persuaded of their God being in their midst (Exod. xxxiii. 14; Ezek. xiii. 9), and that by worship of Him Who inhabits the praises of Israel, though unable there to bring Him any sacrifice of beasts, they were in the holy place of the great temple of the universe, spoken of by Habakkuk in ii. 20.

According to this view, the willows might be regarded as posts whereon to hang their harps in token of having relinquished the use of them, because of the sounds to be elicited therefrom being too lively for harmony with their sad state.<sup>1</sup>

“For there,” continued the psalmist, “they that carried us away captive required of us a song; yea, they that wasted us required of us mirth; saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”

Such were the circumstances under which was asked the affecting question in the 4th verse—

“How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?”

The verses that follow are to be supposed to have been sung at the same time—the scene being laid, as we have observed, on the banks of the river Euphrates.

It is also to be remembered that the mourners were in privacy; for they went on to pour forth elegiac words in mournful dirge-like strains; which, if Babylonians had been present, would have given unnecessary provocation.

We must, therefore, suppose the psalmist in these concluding verses to explain, how those that suspended their harps on the willows, did not intend by that act to renounce the worship of God, or despair of His favour; on the contrary, they had only laid aside for the time of their captivity the instruments employed in mirthful strains; confining themselves to such mournful dirges with the voice, as that in the close of this psalm; when saying with intense repression of feeling—

<sup>1</sup> See Horace :—

“Nunc arma defunctumque bello  
Barbiton hic paries habebit.”

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

"If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

"Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

"O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

"Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

From the foregoing observations, I trust it will appear clear to you, as it does to me, that this psalm was written by one like Ezekiel among the captives, in their lowest state of dejection; and at an early stage too thereof.

For in regard to the retributive dealing with Edom, as predicted in the 7th verse, (which Obadiah more fully dwelt on,) we gather from history that the overthrow of Edom began in the days of the same Nebuchadnezzar who had overthrown Jerusalem.

When Nebuchadnezzar marched against Egypt, Edom lay in his way, and was at that time ravaged and desolated by him.

But the prediction in the 8th verse against Babylon herself did not begin to be fulfilled till the taking of that city by Cyrus the Persian, B.C. 538. But Babylon suffered much more under a siege by Darius, twenty-two years afterwards, who took it in B.C. 516. At that time the citizens of Babylon, who had revolted against the King of Persia, of themselves put to death the greater part of their own wives and children by strangling them for the sake of saving their provisions in the siege.

But a Persian nobleman named Zopyras, mutilated himself by cutting off his nose and ears; and then, having explained to Darius his design in so doing, he pretended to desert to the Babylonians, who crediting his statement that Darius had so mutilated him, entrusted to him the command of an important post on their walls; whereupon he, after having at first procured a seeming victory by slaughter of some of Darius' troops, (which, it had been agreed should be left exposed to him,) by and bye opened the gate in his charge to Darius, who took the city. It appears to me, however, that the massacre inflicted by the Babylonians themselves on their wives and children, though in part fulfilment of the prediction in this last verse of the psalm, did not exhaust its significance.

For the word translated "happy" is ordinarily rendered "blessed," as in verse 1 of Ps. i. implying blessing from God.

Now blessing from God could only come through compliance with a command from God, which certainly the Babylonians themselves had not.

It seems to me, therefore, that like as Jerusalem is called the metropolis or mother city of the children of Israel, so Babylon is here denominated the mother city of Israel's enemies.

As Jerusalem too has sustained many sieges in fulfilment of predictions touching her overthrow, but that the final overthrow to be sustained by that city will include all that had ever been predicted concerning her sufferings—that persecution being destined to be such as to exceed all previous—that “except those days were shortened, no flesh (of that nation) should be saved;” (Matt. xxiv. 22.) even so, the predictions on Babylon will not be exhausted, until the city has been cast down into desolation from which it is never more to rise: according to Isa. xiii. and xiv. as also Jer. l. and li.

To me it seems requisite for the truth of Scripture, that Babylon should be yet rebuilt.

For the fourth monarchy predicted by Daniel, corresponding with the legs and feet of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, has not yet been brought into actual union with the head. But union of all the limbs with the head, was a characteristic feature of that image, implying that the supreme head of each of the four empires for the time being, should be king of Babylon.

So far as the Spirit of God by Daniel interpreted the dream, we are shewn that the monarchs of the three successive empires were kings of Babylon; that is, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Alexander.

Now if the Roman be the fourth, it, though represented by the legs and feet, has never yet been joined to the head. For Rome never possessed Babylon. Accordingly I conclude that the king of the fourth monarchy has yet to arise and reign, so that Babylon must be rebuilt for him to be its head. See on this point Zech. v. 5—11. Now if this king of the fourth monarchy be the same as “the little horn” in Dan. viii. 9, that should arise out of one of the four parts of Alexander's empire; that is, from the country whence he issued, namely Macedonia, where was Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople, and that a Mahomedan prince should recover by the resuscitated fanaticism of that sect, an empire identical with that of the kings of the other three empires, there we should plainly recognise the fourth monarchy.

It may be that this king will from out of Babylon afflict Jerusalem, at that time re-established, to such a degree, as to provoke from God a retributive commission to the chosen remnant of Israel, similar to that given their first fathers when invading Canaan; (Deut. vii. 2; Joshua vi. 21; 1 Sam. xv. 3); which, if they had executed, would have caused them to be blessed.

What God could once give in command, He can with equal justice do again. It seems therefore to me that the last verse

of this psalm points to His doing so, for the same reasons as formerly, to a generation of Israelites which will not be disobedient, and so will be "blessed." (Isa. lxiii. 8; xxvi. 5, 6.)

It is worthy of remark that ever since the captivity in Babylon the Jews, who previously were so prone to idolatry, have been cured of it; amidst all their national faults they have refrained from idols.

What then, if after the destruction of Babylon by the hand of Israelites in the manner here predicted, idolatry (which first began in Babylon) should thenceforward be renounced by all mankind? (Jer. l. 23 and 46.)

The sight presented to the mind's eye in this psalm of Jews so cut to the heart by the gladness of the songs of Zion as to be unable to sing them in the captivity which they had brought upon themselves by their sins, forcibly pictures to us what grief children of God amongst us endure, if for scandalous sins, excluded from the congregation of the Lord: the very gladness wherewith they had once served God in public worship, and might then be doing so, but for their sin, smites them with the most poignant compunction; weeping and mourning alone harmonises with their mind, in this state of probation, until they be restored to God's public worship: and for the same reason, on the exclusion from worship of God in the congregation being that by God Himself, when our time of probation is ended; that weeping at remembrance of mercies wilfully forsaken, is to be accompanied by "gnashing of teeth"—the mute gesture of remorse! (Matt. xxii. 13.)

1.

By Babel's river sat we down and wept  
At thought of Zion: down our harps we laid,  
As not for us, upon the willows there.  
For they, that us in cruel bondage kept,  
A song solicited—our captors said,  
Of Zion's city sing some cheerful air.

2.

How in a land of strangers shall we sing  
Jehovah's song? if, O Jerusalem,  
I thee forget, be my hand's use forgot!  
If Thee I do not to remembrance bring;  
My tongue to loss of speech let God condemn,  
If in Jerusalem my joy be not!

## 3.

Of Edom, O Jehovah, mindful be,  
 Who at Jerusalem's day cried in spite—  
 Rase her foundations and in fragments smash.  
 Thou also, Babel, doomed to misery,  
 Blest he, who smites thee, as thou us didst smite—  
 Blest he, who 'gainst the stones thy babes doth dash.

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 PSALM CXXXVIII.
 

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## TITLE.

For David.

In Pole's "Synopsis Criticorum" it is stated that in one version of the Septuagint there is added to the above title, "of Haggai and Zechariah."

This ancient explanatory notification concerning the authorship of this psalm inclines me to think that subsequently to the rebuilding of the Temple in Haggai's day, this psalm was composed by the joint labours of him and Zechariah, concerning David's Son and Lord—the Messiah—Who is the true David or Beloved.

## ARGUMENT.

This psalm rehearses after David's manner and, as it were, in his person, as if he were alive in his lineal descendant, Zerubabel, hopes which, while he lived, he had so addressed to God, and left on record in his psalms.

The words of the first verse are in the former clause identical with those of the ninth psalm; but instead of the rest of that verse, "I will shew forth all Thy marvellous works," we have here, "Before the gods will I sing praise unto Thee," an expression not met with in the first forty-one psalms compiled by David himself, nor likely to have been entertained by him; for, being king, he would not look upon it as a great proof of boldness in confessing the name of the God of Israel, that he should do this in the presence of the judges, who were his subjects, who are sometimes in Scripture called gods. (Exod. xxii. 28.)

Or again, as regards heathen kings, who seem to be here meant by "gods" (see verse 4), David himself, after he had become

king, had, during his subsequent life, no opportunity of proving his boldness in the worship of God by confessing Him before them.

But when Zerubbabel, the lineal representative of David, was rehearsing these hopes concerning God's promise to his forefather, it would be on his part an undoubted mark of boldness in the faith to record these hopes of the family of David in the God of Israel before the kings of the surrounding tribes or nations.

To say in the 2nd verse—

“I will worship toward Thy holy temple and praise Thy Name for Thy lovingkindness—or mercy—and truth,”

is entirely after David's manner of speech in Ps. v. 7.

In the words which follow—

“For Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name;” a term is in the original used for “word” which means “the word of promise;” to wit, that concerning the birth of David's expected Son, the Messiah.

Now we see by the second of Haggai, at verse 7, that there was granted to that prophet an express word concerning the coming of Messiah, where we read:—

“I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Assuredly so gracious a promise as this delivered to Haggai might well call forth the grateful acknowledgment, “Thou hast magnified Thy word”—that is, concerning David's Son, the promised Saviour—“above all Thy Name.” The Name of God is a word appointed to be a sign of all that God makes known to us concerning ‘Himself,’ or concerning ‘His’ purposes towards us; wherefore the meaning here is, “Thy Name is more magnified in what Thou hast now said by Haggai concerning my house (supposing Zerubbabel to be the speaker) than in all Thou hast heretofore made known that Thou wouldst do for man's happiness; which was embodied, as it were, in our memories by means of Thy Name.” The words of the 3rd verse may then be regarded as expressing what comfort Zerubbabel had when in answer to his prayer Haggai had, on his behalf, received “the word” above recited.

Well might Zerubbabel say:—

“In the day when I cried, Thou answered'st me, and strengthened'st me with strength in my soul.”

After this renewed promise concerning the coming of Christ, the language of the 4th verse may be supposed to have provided



suitable words for Zerubbabel in faithful commemoration of what David had written in such places as that in Ps. xxii. 27—

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.”

And still more closely in that of Ps. lxxii., where David was instructed to predict concerning his promised Son, under the name of Solomon, or peace—wherewith the promise to Haggai closes—

“All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him.”

Agreeably wherewith, in this 4th verse it is written :—

“All the kings of the earth shall praise Thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of Thy mouth.

“Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.”

Wherewith compare Numb. xiv. 21.

Now we know that “the words of the Lord’s mouth” are to be found in the Gospels of the New Testament.

Also these words of the Lord’s mouth are called “the ways of the Lord,” for in Acts xiii. 8, when Elymas the Sorcerer was rebuked for seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith, Paul asked, “Wilt not thou cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”—those ways in which it is here predicted that the kings of the earth shall sing, because of “the Lord’s great glory” (verse 5), and because of “His mercy and truth” (verse 2).

What is said in the 6th verse, where we read, “Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly, but the proud He knoweth afar off,” may be taken for a reference to the language of David in Ps. xlv. 3, concerning the progress of the Gospel of peace in this first age of the kingdom of heaven among the meek and poor in spirit (to the rejection of them that are wise in their own eyes), through the ministry of them that are as babes (Ps. viii. 2)—and “earthen vessels” (2 Cor. iv. 7)—“that the excellency of the power should be of God and not of them;” where it is written, “In Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of Truth, of Meekness, and of Righteousness;”

after which, “Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things.” (Ps. lxi. 5; Heb. x. 29, 30.)

In the 7th verse, where we read—

“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me. Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me,”—the representative of David’s house is, as it were, made in David’s person to repeat what David himself had put on record in Ps. xviii. 37—42, and lxxi. 20, where he said: “Thou Which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again from the depths of the earth.”

And when, in the 8th verse, we read—

“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me ; Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever. Forsake not the works of Thine own hands,” David’s representative may be regarded as here instructed to refer to David’s own words in 2 Sam. viii. 25, where it is written: “And now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said.”

The time of this psalm’s probable composition and earliest use having now been stated, we may observe, that on us, as being of the only remnant of the true Israelites in this day, rests the obligation of “praising God with the whole heart before the gods,” or highest earthly authorities over or around us ; lifting up our hearts to the Son of David in His holy temple above, and confessing how in His Gospel his Name is more magnified than ever before. For the Cross of Christ, which is our peace, is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Because of this, that He hath done, shall kings honour Him, when they hear the words of His mouth.

Our duty, moreover, is to give the kings of the earth and their subjects opportunity of hearing those words ; which we may do by contributing our alms to those Societies in our Church which carry on Missions in our Colonies, or beyond them.

1.

With my whole heart Thee will I praise,  
Before the gods with song in sooth—  
And worship t’ward Thy holy place,  
Lauding Thy mercy and Thy truth.

2.

’Bove all Thy Name did e’er import,  
Hast Thou Thy promise magnified.  
To Thee did I in prayer resort,  
And Thou hast inward strength supplied.

3.

All kings, Jehovah, o’er the earth  
Their vows to Thee shall dedicate ;  
Yea in Jehovah’s ways find mirth,  
Because His glory is so great.

## 4.

Jehovah is exalted high,  
 Yet to the lowly hath respect;  
 But scanneth coldly, distantly,  
 All that in pride the head erect.

## 5.

Though 'midst sore trouble lies my path,  
 Me Thou 'lt revive, and off me stave  
 With outstretch'd hand my haters' wrath;  
 Yea with Thy right hand me shalt save.

## 6.

What thing soe'er concerneth me,  
 That will Jehovah perfect make.  
 Thy mercy shall unceasing be—  
 'Thine own hands' work 'Thou 'lt not forsake.

## PSALM CXXXIX.

## TITLE.

To the chief Musician ; a psalm of David.

## ARGUMENT.

This psalm, consisting of twenty-four verses, may, as it seems to me, be advantageously divided into four equal portions of six verses each. In the first portion the psalmist describes his awe at God's close and constant scrutiny of him. The conscientious and faithful worshipper finds comfort herein, because persuaded that his service, done in singleness of heart, will not escape the Divine notice. The Lord Jesus, in Matt. vi. 1—6, charges His disciples to practise self-denial, give alms, and pray to their heavenly Father in secret, that their Father, Who seeth in secret, may reward them openly. Also in John v. 44, He significantly asked some in His day, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another; and seek not the honour which cometh

of God only?" Were such conscientious persons able always to remember God's presence, their word would be as good as their oath. But they do not always bear God in mind. When, however, such persons say they so do, they afford a neighbour all the assurance he can require, that they are careful about what they are called on to speak of. On this account it is that an honest man's oath is more satisfactory than his word; his avowal that he speaks as in the presence of God is virtually to make oath, whether or not he clothes his testimony in the usual form of one. The avowal of one's appeal to God, as witness of what one is about to say, is the very essence of an oath. For the Lord is He Who alone "searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, to give every one according to his ways; and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. xvii. 10.) Consequently an appeal to any other than Him to witness the thought of one's heart is vain.

For the same reason, remembrance of God's eye being upon one is the most effectual restraint from crime. The most hardened offenders will rarely indulge their lust while they think their fellow-man's eye is upon them; if, therefore, they could but be habitually admonished of God's eye being upon them, they never could be at peace in commission of sin, or crime. Hence that boy who, upon being asked, how could you dare to do such a thing in so public a place, replied, I looked this way and that, and was sure no one saw me—was rightly reprovèd by his father, who asked him, Why did you not look upward?

Through God's restraining grace the remembrance of His eye upon one, often so troubles the conscience of a wrong-doer in the beginning of his career, that he endeavours by casting God out of his thoughts to persuade himself that he can escape the Divine notice.

The futility of this attempt at ease in sin is treated of by the psalmist in the second portion—where he shews that the entire universe would be but the prison wherein to confine those whom the Almighty would punish. (See Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.) Hence he, that turns away from God merciful, runs upon God the Avenger.

In the third portion the psalmist passes on to describe how closely God concerns Himself with the fashioning of man's body in his mother's womb (called in verse 15 "the lower parts—to wit, those of the earth"), just as Milton, in his morning hymn in *Paradise Lost*, makes Adam say of God—

"To us invisible or dimly seen  
In these Thy lowest works; yet these declare  
Thy goodness, beyond thought and power, divine."

Compare Isa. xlv. 3; hence, as it seems to me, the psalmist would deduce that it ought not to be wondered at that God

should, after such care over us in the formation of our bodies at entrance of life, continue His regard to us as described in the first portion; or, as Job asks, "open His eyes upon such an one" (ch. xiv. 3); whence also the psalmist asks, "Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. viii. 4.)

But I am persuaded that the psalmist only refers here to God's fashioning of his body in his mother's womb, for the sake of awakening the hearer's attention to the like care on God's part in fashioning him anew within his own breast, by a lengthened operation of the Holy Ghost upon him, whereof the process of generation in the mother's womb was an acknowledged type in Scripture—an earthly thing, as the Lord Jesus reminded Nicodemus (John iii. 12);—or, in other words, an operation of the Holy Ghost through the word of promise, which God's ministers had been commissioned to teach on earth ages previous; as contra-distinguished from the new Articles of faith the Lord Jesus had only then brought from heaven.

Other such passages in the Old Testament, besides this of verses 13—18, are that in Ps. lviii. 3, Isa. xxxvii. 3, Hosea xiii. 13. By comparison of St. Paul's words in Ephes. iv. 7—16 with those in this psalm from 13 to 18, it seems that the Apostle, in his view of the psalmist's words, in this place, connected God's fashioning of the psalmist's body in his mother's womb with the fashioning of that for the promised Son of David—the Christ—in His mother's womb; and subsequently in the grave; which meaning is undoubtedly included in the expression "lowest parts" of the earth. (See Psalm lxiii. 9, and Acts xiii. 33.)

After a like manner in the eighth psalm, though commencing with surprise at what God would condescend to do for man (verse 3), the psalmist presently carries the reader's thoughts forward to God's purpose concerning Christ as Man; thereby leading one to ask in admiring wonder, What will He not do for man?

We suppose then that the psalmist in this third portion of the psalm before us passes on from contemplation of his own body, when under the creative hand of God in his mother's womb, to that of the expected Son of David in his Virgin Mother's womb; and again in the grave; according to Ps. ii. 7 and lxxvii. 5; or rather, Christ Himself may be here perceived to shine forth through the words of this psalm as speaking to God for Himself, and saying emphatically at close of this portion, "When I awake—to wit, from the grave—I am still with Thee"—a train of thought linking this portion of the psalm with St. Paul's descendant thereon in Ephes. iv. 7—16, already quoted.

This expression, too, finds its counterpart in Ps. lxxxviii. 13, and John xvi. 32.

But in Christ's own regeneration (compare Matt. xix. 28) that of our souls by conversion in this life, and of our very bodies at the resurrection of the dead, is included. (See John v. 24—

29.) Hence it seems to me clear that the psalmist, in closing this third portion with the words "when I awake I am still with Thee," did not, for his own part, so much refer to waking out of sleep and rising from off his bed, as rather waking up from the sleep in the grave, spoken of by Job xiv. 12—15; when, because of God being with him, Who through all his continuance in the lowest parts of the earth—the grave—shall have watched over him, he shall have no less care bestowed by God upon his new body, than heretofore on the former one in his mother's womb. (Matt. vi. 30.)

Now we, who hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, are warned that except we suffer with Christ we shall never reign with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12); hence it follows, that except we heed His voice saying unto us, "Awake, thou that sleepest" (Ephes. v. 14), we cannot be saved.

But to be thus awakened to effectually ask for light, is to be born again of the Spirit, as the Lord Jesus told Nicodemus was known to the congregation of Israel in the psalmist's day—that doctrine being an earthly thing—consequently the psalmist, by faithfully anticipating his resurrection with a glorified body in saying, "When I awake, I am still with Thee," included therein the preparatory work of awakening by conversion unto God with faith in His promise concerning Christ; that so he might acceptably ask of God a measure of the Spirit of Christ for renewal day by day—wherewith to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." (Micah vi. 8.)

After the same manner, then, that the psalmist in these words, "When I awake, I am still with Thee" (following on an elaborate description of God's fashioning of a body for him in his mother's womb), implied that God would do the like for his risen body; so, too, we assume that there is to be included therein, that God will create and build up the new man in the breast of each believer; when, after having been awakened, he shall have obtained from God through Christ renewal of the Holy Ghost.

Then there are in him two natures—the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. v. 16—18): the flesh, or old man, with its "motions of sins" (Rom. vii. 5) must not be given way to, but "resisted" and "purged out" (Ephes. iv. 27, James iv. 7, 1 Cor. v. 7); if we would not have those sinful motions charged upon us by the Father, Whose eye is upon us (Jer. xvii. 10, John xv. 1—3). For "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth. For from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts." (Matt. xv. 11—19.)

God hath called us in holiness, and provided that in Christ (Rom. vi. 13) "we should not yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Hereupon the Father, for Christ's sake, will not charge on us the motions of sin against which we honestly combat; for He can, consistently with His holiness and hatred of sin, do this; seeing that by the Holy Ghost's burial of us into Christ, and incorporation with Him in His mystical body, we are passed from death unto life, and are not under law, but under grace. (John v. 24.)

Nevertheless God, "Who is about our path and about our bed and spieth out all our ways," is holy, and wills that we should be holy. (1 Pet. i. 13—19.) For "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.)

Of what unspeakable importance, then, is it to the renewed man, who, being awakened, "hath God with him," to watch against "the motions of sins in the flesh," and not to indulge them, but crucify them for Christ's sake. (See Jude vv. 20, 21.)

There is no doubt in my mind that the psalmist had in view this solemn obligation laid on him as a renewed man, by reason of God being with him in his awakening unto hope of a happy resurrection; and thus I trace a connection in thought between this third portion and the fourth; wherein he expressly speaks of hating those that live in open sin; concluding with a prayer that God would make him more vigilant still in self-examination; that so, being in the right way, he might not decline from it. (Rom. vi. 22, 23.)

This sanctifying use of the remembrance that God is with us is of unspeakable importance, and causes this psalm to be one very needful to be called to mind again and again. Thus shall we, by grace, thankfully receive the promise in Ps. xxxii. 8—"I will instruct thee and teach thee, in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with Mine eye."

## 1.

Me, O Jehovah, Thou hast search'd and known,  
My sitting down and rising up hast mark'd!  
Thou compasses't my path and lying down,  
And hast recorded howsoe'er I've walk'd;  
Nor is there one of all the words I've talk'd,  
But lo! Jehovah, Thou dost know it well;  
All that befel me in the past, and all  
That shall in time forthcoming, Thou canst tell!  
Thy hand is on me! too sublime I call  
Such knowledge; yea, it doth my heart appal.

2.

Where from before Thy Spirit shall I go?  
 From 'fore Thy presence whither shall I flee?  
 Could I ascend up into heaven, lo!  
 There Thou art! or resolve my bed shall be  
 In hell; lo! Thou art there too! If to me  
 Were giv'n wings, as of the morn, to hie  
 Unto the furthest confines of the sea;  
 Thy hand—Thy right hand—shall I soon find nigh;  
 Or, should I seek in darkness secrecy;  
 Darkness is all one, as the light, to Thee!

3.

Within my mother's womb hast Thou possess'd  
 My reins, and clothed me! Thee will I praise,  
 My Maker! Thy dread works shall be confess'd  
 By me; Who didst in secret interlace  
 Nerves, veins,<sup>1</sup> and sinews—limiting the days  
 When in Thy book my members should be writ,  
 While yet were none! O God, Thy thoughts for me,  
 How wonderful! The sum of them how great!  
 As sand, past counting inconceivably!  
 When I awake up, I am still with Thee!

4.

Thou surely wilt, O God, the wicked slay.  
 Away from me, ye men of blood, depart!  
 For 'gainst Thy Name ungratefully speak they.  
 And unto me my All in all Thou art!  
 Hate I not them, Jehovah, who at heart  
 Hate Thee? and am I not an enemy  
 Unto Thine enemies? with perfect hate  
 I hate them! Search my heart and try  
 My reins, O God! Sin make me execrate,  
 And in the way eternal on Thee wait!

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 15. רֶקֶמְתִּי embroidered, wrought as with a needle, referring to the outer covering of the human body (the muscles, veins, etc.), as the word substance עֲצָמִי does to the bony skeleton.



## PSALM CXL.

## TITLE.

To the chief Musician. A psalm of David.

From the ninth and tenth psalms we may gather that to David was vouchsafed by the Spirit of Christ a revelation of the opposition that should be raised, not only among Gentiles, but also in his own nation against the person and rightful ascendancy of his expected Son and Lord—the promised Messiah. Hence, by these two psalms we have proof, that a revelation on this subject was not for the first time communicated to Nebuchadnezzar, a Gentile, in that dream interpreted by Daniel; since in a general way a revelation on the same subject had been long before vouchsafed to David.

There is, however, this characteristic difference between the earlier and later of these revelations touching the setting up of Messiah's kingdom upon earth; that, whereas the earlier revelation to David is of a general character, as regards the opposition of Gentiles, but explicit in reference to that which shall be offered by the psalmist's own nation; the later revelation is more explicit in detailing how within four monarchies shall be comprised the opposition presented by the Gentiles to the setting up of Christ's kingdom, while making brief reference to the cutting off of Messiah by His own people. This actual state of the revelations on the subject commends itself to our judgment upon reflection, as being in harmony with God's general method of procedure; for in Amos iii. 7 is laid down what appears to be a canon or universal rule on the subject in hand.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."

Now He would seem to me to have contravened this rule, had he made to Nebuchadnezzar—a Gentile—the earliest revelation concerning what opposition Gentiles should be permitted to offer against the setting up of His Son's kingdom; whereas it is in accordance with that canon cited out of Amos, that David should have the earlier communications by revelation on that subject.

Furthermore it seems to me warranted by the tenour of the eleventh and twelfth psalms, to assume that there is no need of inquiring what probable event in David's life could have been the occasion of his descanting in dark speeches upon what on a far greater scale to the like effect should befall his greater Son.

To me it seems more agreeable with probability to look on the ninth and tenth psalms as purely Messianic, that is to say, solely treating of the Messiah, like the eleventh, the twenty-second, the forty-fourth, and others.

Moreover, in these ninth and tenth psalms, David identifies himself with the followers of his expected Son, the Christ; as though he in their person sustained the protracted conflict, even unto the final triumph.

Nor is this to be deemed altogether a mere rhetorical figure; for the Scripture, from the time of man's creation, intimates that those who by faith in God's promise concerning Christ obtain, in answer to their prayers, a measure of the Spirit of Christ for their renewal, are mystically one with Him.

See Gen. ii. 24 (where the covenant of marriage notified this, Eph. v. 25—32); Gen. vi. 1—8; Heb. iii. 1—6. And not only this, but the Scripture also speaks of a more special union between those in Christ, on whom shall have been placed by God what measure of the Spirit may have been given for a special purpose; as, for instance, in the case of that given to Elijah, (Mal. ii. 15); a double measure whereof was put upon Elisha: and ages afterwards, a measure upon John Baptist—making him in scriptural language one with Elijah before God—as we suppose David in this 131st psalm reckoned that he should be, through time forthcoming, with Messiah.

We may furthermore consider David to have hereby restricted his identification of himself with his descendants to those who by like faith with his in Christ, should suffer in meekness of spirit, making God their avenger. If these observations on the ninth and tenth psalms are well founded, being derivable from examination of their contents, then this 140th, may be seen to entirely accord with them herein.

And by way of accounting for its late insertion in the book of psalms, we may suppose, that after David had arranged his own book, consisting of the first forty-one, he composed many others, more especially concerning the sufferings and triumphs of his Son, the Messiah; which being sung in the temple service, as are our hymns, were subsequently inserted in the succeeding books of psalms, according as their compilers found psalms of David answering the plan upon which they might be framing their book.

Now we have concluded, that the recovery of the descendants of the ten tribes to worship at Jerusalem was the leading object with the compiler of the second book in Hezekiah's day—and of the third book too; but the fourth was compiled during the captivity in Babylon: on which account, those of David's composition yet extant, which did not answer the compiler's plan were left out.

Whereas in this fifth book (which is supposed to have been

arranged after the return of the Jews from Babylon,) seeing that the trials to be undergone by such of the Israelites as should believe in David's Son—the Christ—until the establishment of His kingdom in Israel in great glory, formed the leading theme of this book (as is to be gathered from its first psalm, the 107th), it is plain that the psalms of David now found in this book entirely accorded with the compiler's plan.

Thus, as it seems to me, may the late insertion of certain psalms of David's in the Psalter be plausibly accounted for.

It seems to me also, viewing this 140th psalm in this light, as in reality treating of the same subject with those of the ninth and tenth, that it bears in its tone of expression marks of ripeness and maturity of reflection upon the sufferings of David's or of Messiah's seed in Israel—the afflicted and poor, but righteous ones, of successive generations therein—whom God should in due time avenge. (Luke xviii. 7, 8.)

It is such a ripeness as might be expected to characterise the later compositions of the royal psalmist, in contradistinction from his earlier ones.

Bishop Horsley describes this psalm as "A prayer of a believer for protection from the Atheistical Conspiracy,"—that is, of Antichrist and his adherents, forming the subject of prophecy in psalms ix. and x.

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### ARGUMENT.

The evil and violent man, mentioned as an individual in the first verse, is in the second shewn, by use of the plural personal pronoun, meant to be the type of a class, although destined to culminate in one head. The last clause of the third verse,—

"Adder's poison is under their lips,"

is quoted by St. Paul in the third chapter of his epistle to the Romans, as descriptive of opposition to David's Son, offered by ungodly Jews. For the Apostle's comment upon it is, "What things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law."

The fourth and four following verses express David's anticipation of such success on the part of his Son's enemies against His people, as to hold out no other hope, eventually, of safety, than by direct interference from heaven.

The mention in the ninth verse of the injury to be done the people of his Son by "lying lips," remarkably agrees with what we read in Daniel vii. 8—25, about "a little horn with a mouth speaking great things— even great words against the Most High;" and the parallel vision in Rev. xiii. 5, 6, of him unto

whom was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and who "opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

While in the tenth verse, where it is written, "Let burning coals fall upon them, let them be cast into the fire—into deep pits that they rise not up again"—

we have a clear reference to the same judgment as is treated of in the fifth and sixth verses of the eleventh psalm, as also in Isa. xxvi. 14, where we read,—

"They are dead—they shall not live—they are deceased—they shall not rise. Therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." Upon which judgment further light is thrown in Rev. xix. 20, where we read that "the beast and the false prophet were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone."

And this judgment, though executed upon them in their mortal bodies on the earth, is to be their final judgment; because in the following chapter, the twentieth, at verse 10, the devil is at the close of the millennium to be finally "cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are;" which is the second death, verse 14. (Jude v. 12.)

After this recital by the psalmist of the conflict to be sustained by him in the persons of such among his people, as are incorporated with his Son, so as to be one Spirit (John viii. 35, 36) with Him, his concluding words in verses twelve and thirteen are to this effect:—

"I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted and of the righteous. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy Name, the upright shall dwell in Thy presence."

These words seem to have been written by David in a frame of mind similar to that wherein his son Solomon wrote, as one tired out with the perverseness of his fellow countrymen, in Eccles. viii. 11; "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

"Though a sinner do evil a hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him."

"But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

## 1.

Free me, Jehovah, from the wicked crowd<sup>1</sup>—  
 From the ferocious ruler<sup>1</sup> save Thou me,  
 With crafty hearts 'gainst me confederate—  
 Unceasingly conspiring, threatening loud,  
 Their tongues dart they, as serpents wont to be ;  
 As adders' poison, 'neath their lips is hate.

## 2.

From wicked hands, Jehovah, free Thou me,  
 And from the man of violence protect,  
 Whose purpose is my goings to o'erthrow !  
 In laying snares for them that faithful be  
 Unto my Son, 'gainst me they them direct ;  
 Who harass this my Seed, do bring me low.

## 3.

Unto Jehovah, Thou'rt my God, I said !  
 My supplications, O Jehovah, hear !  
 O God, Jehovah,<sup>2</sup> my salvation's source !  
 Thou in the battle covered'st my head !  
 Let not the wicked, lest himself he bear  
 Too proudly, vict'ry wrest by fraud or force.

## 4.

Upon the head of them, that me surround,  
 The fraud of their own lips cause to recoil.  
 Let light'ning bolts<sup>3</sup> from heaven on them fall !  
 Into the abyss of fire cast them bound  
 Never to rise!<sup>4</sup> And of its prey despoil  
 The wicked tongue, till whelm'd in evil's thrall.

<sup>1</sup> Verse 1. מְאֹדִים with which is contrasted מְאִישׁ—The common man versus the chief—as in verse 4, מִיְּדֵי רָשָׁע with מְאִישׁ חֲמָסָם

<sup>2</sup> Verses 6, 7, 8. The triple repetition of the Name Jehovah, is surely here significant as in Ps. vi. 8, 9, and xli. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 10. Ps. iv. 3; 2 Thess. i. 7—9; Heb. x. 29—31.

<sup>4</sup> Verse 10. 2 Peter ii. 4; Isa. xxvi. 4; Rev. xix. 19, 20, compared with xx. 10.

5.

The cause of the afflicted, well I know,  
Jehovah will in righteousness maintain—

The right much-question'd of the meek and poor.  
Time shall be, when Thy righteous ones, altho'  
Long mourning, shall Thy blissful presence gain,  
And "David's mercies"<sup>5</sup> prove, to Thy great  
Name's praise, "sure."

<sup>5</sup> Verse 13. Ps. lxxxix. 28; Isa. lv. 3.

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PSALM CXLI.

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TITLE.

A Psalm of David.

In accordance with the above title commentators in general think that the slaughter of the priests and destruction of their city by Doeg (1 Sam. xxii.) was the occasion on which David wrote this psalm.

Rather than suppose that David in the straits and exigencies to which he was reduced in his early days, when driven by Saul out of Judea, composed sundry psalms on the same event, I would indulge the conjecture, that after he had arranged those in the book composed by him, he in later life reverted to the contemplation of these and others not included in that first batch of forty-one.

The seventy-first and seventy-second psalms shew that David composed new ones almost to the end of his life. Is it not then highly probable that when, ripe in years and experience, he contemplated what the Spirit of Christ had prompted him to write upon adverse events befalling him in his early days, he dwelt chiefly on the secondary and mysterious application that the Spirit of Christ made of them, to foreshadow calamities destined to overtake the remnant of the true Israelites—one with David himself through faith in his expected Son, the Messiah—until that Divine Son should overcome all opposition and establish His Israel in great glory in Jerusalem?

In this way, as it seems to me, David wrote fresh psalms upon the old subjects, with more special regard than before to the calamities destined to overtake the remnant of true Israelites in the generations that should succeed each other, until their final triumph with the triumphant Messiah.

It has been already observed in commenting on the fifty-second psalm that the slaughter of the priests by Doeg was the first instance in Scripture of such a massacre having been appointed by the government under which the ministers of God lived: on which account it was made by the Holy Ghost in that psalm a type of the terrible persecution appointed to overtake the remnant of the true Israelites in the last days immediately preceding Messiah's triumph. (See Jer. xxx. 5—9; Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.)

It seems to me therefore that David in his later psalms, on the subjects of his former ones, aimed more especially at putting on record words of counsel and comfort for the use of his faithful descendants, under their aggravated and protracted trials in their service to his Son and Lord.

On this supposition therefore, like as there seemed to me in the composition of the hundred and fortieth psalm special regard to the ninth and tenth, and in the hundred and forty-fourth to the eighteenth, so in this hundred and forty-first to the fifty-second, and in the hundred and forty-second to the fifty-seventh, and in the hundred and forty-third to the sixty-third.

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### ARGUMENT.

When David contemplated the terrible massacre, which the faithful adherents of his Son should from time to time undergo, after the manner in which the priests of the Lord had at the hand of Doeg, which should culminate in one final and all but universal one, may we not consider him to have been desirous of supplying them with words of counsel and comfort during their pilgrimage?

In this frame of mind we suppose him with unfeigned distress to have lifted up his prayer to God for help.

In the second verse, where he saith—

“Let my prayer be set forth as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice”—

it has been observed that there is in these words an indication of David's being at that time debarred from access to the ark of God; as was the case when a fugitive in the forest of Hareth. (1 Sam. xxii. 5.)

In accordance with my theory concerning the composition of this psalm, I observe that an equally effectual impediment in the way of access to the ark of God might have arisen from feebleness or ill-health in David's declining years.

Under these circumstances excluding him from public worship of God (which may indeed be part of the affliction destined to overtake the remnant of the true Israelites in the last days of Antichrist—Malachi iii. 15—18), the words of this second verse forcibly express the obligation to solemnity in worship in private as in public.

Like as the vapour of burning incense rises at a rate proper to itself and cannot be hurried, so should the worshipper's prayer in secret—solemnly—reverently : and like as the lamb laid on the altar was opened by the sacrificer's knife before God, so should the private worshipper look on his inmost heart as laid open by the sword of Christ's word (Heb. iv. 12), while his hands shall be lifted up over his opened heart as were those of the priest over the sacrificed lamb.

The third verse, in which David wrote—

“Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips”—

denotes how apprehensive he was lest his faithful descendants should be made offenders for a word. (Isa. xxix. 21.) His grandson Rehoboam (1 Kings xii. 1—19) was culpably regardless of this advice, and in consequence thereof alienated ten of the tribes from under the house of David, which have not yet returned to their allegiance ; nor shall, until the day of the triumphant Messiah. (Ezek. xx. 40.)

When David, in the fourth verse, goes on to pray—

“Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity ; and let me not eat of their dainties”—

the conduct of Adonijah, in 1 Kings i. 18—26, though happening after David had written this psalm, will serve to shew how plotters and conspirators seek to enlist their simple adherents in their dark designs under the colour of a feast. The old prophet at Bethel (1 Kings xiii.) apparently fell the more readily into the deluding spirit's suggestion that he should draw the man from Judah into breach of the express word of God by eating with him ; because to partake of food with one was considered a token of brotherhood or fraternisation in policy.

David here, after having in verse 3 warned the remnant of the true Israelites on the one hand against use of grievous words which work not the righteousness of God, but stir up anger ; and in verse 4 warned them, on the other hand, against such civility in compliance with invitations to the feasts of false brethren as would entangle the righteous in inconsistencies—adds in the fifth verse an injunction about readiness to receive reproof from those that are in reputation for fidelity, and are jealous for God at a time of double-dealing, and halting between two opinions : for the salutary reproofs of them that are jealous



of God will be an excellent oil (carrying on the figure of a banquet, Ps. xxiii. 5, Luke vii. 46), which shall not cause the guest to hang his head in shame, as did the courtesy of the old prophet with the man of God from Judah; "for," continues David in the last clause of this fifth verse, "yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities:" whereby David intimates, that by having been seen to have refrained from grievous words which stir up anger—and declined in the day of the rival doctors' prosperity their offers of hospitality—if, when calamities shall overtake them, the remnant of the true Israelites are seen to be far from glorying over them, and even praying for them (Ps. xxxv. 13, 14), fresh converts may by God's blessing be gained out of their company to the remnant of the true Israelites.

That opportunity of doing an enemy good will abundantly recompense the true Israelite for his long-sustained endurance of provocation without reviling again. For "he that turneth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 20.)

To the same effect in the sixth verse David continues—

"When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words, for they are sweet."

Then follow in the seventh verse the words which lead commentators to think this psalm to have been written with reference to the slaughter of the priests by Doeg.

And the psalm concludes with consolatory rehearsal of God's promise not to "leave the soul of the righteous destitute," let what may happen to their bodies (Luke xii. 4, 5); followed by the oft-repeated asseveration that the plots of the antichristian conspirators shall at the culmination of their machinations conspicuously recoil on their own heads. (Ps. vii. 11—16; ix. 16; lviii. 10, 11; lxix. 22; lxxxiii. ; and xciv. 23.)

This hundred and forty-first psalm, thus interpreted, is admirably adapted for guidance of the remnant of the true Israelites, with whom David so heartily sympathised, even in the present days of peace in much favoured England.

The exhortation to reverence in prayer, public and private, is greatly needed by so many of us as believe and know Christ's truth. There is a lack of solemnity and of reverence, alas! characterising our worship of God; Who nevertheless looketh to be honoured by them that come nigh Him, as well as to be glorified before all the people. (Levit. x. 3.)

The petition in the third verse for grace to rule one's tongue is also eminently needful to be borne in mind; for James, chap. iii. 2—6, warns us of the mischief occasioned by a tongue not so guarded.

St. Peter too, in his 1 Ep. iii. 10, saith—

"He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile."

This government of the tongue is, as the psalmist intimates in verses 5 and 6, to be the more stedfastly pursued, with the charitable view of being on that account the better fitted to gain a hearing for the sweet and softly-flowing words of the gospel of peace, in case the proud opponents of Christ's way of justification and sanctification should be overtaken by adversity. For in adversity the heart is usually softened and impressible.

The psalmist is very desirous of stirring up the remnant of the true Israelites to watch for such opportunities for overcoming evil with good (Rom. xii. 21)—not avenging themselves; in the persuasion that God will avenge them in the way most redounding to His glory and the happiness of the greater number of mankind.

1.

On Thee, Jehovah, call I ; let assistance  
 Accordant with my cry to me be given.  
 Before Thee let my prayer mount up as incense ;  
 My rais'd hands, as the sacrifice at even.

2.

Before my mouth, Jehovah, set a warder !  
 Control my utterance ! to aught that's evil  
 Let not my heart cleave—a supine regarder  
 Of wicked ones—lest I sink to their level.

3.

Make me beware how I eat of their dainties ;  
 Far better 'twere for righteous ones to smite me  
 With censure ; as an oil, it's excellences  
 Would deck, not shame, my head ; like theirs, who'd  
 spite me.

4.

For I'll, in these men's grief, lift my petition :  
 So, when their judges<sup>1</sup> fall in stony places,

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 6. שֹׁפְטֵי־הָעָם, not here judges by office in civil courts ; but doctors who, whether or not holding a sacred office, used to deliver to their disciples judgments or decisions on such doctrines, as justification before God, to serve their own lusts. (Ps. xiv. 6 compared with verse 4 of this psalm.)

To those, whose hearts are melted in contrition,  
Sweet will my words be—fraught with healing  
graces.

5.

Our bones full thick at the grave's mouth are scat-  
ter'd ;

As one wood on the earth cutteth and cleaveth.  
My hopes were, but for God Jehovah, shatter'd ;  
Who ne'er His people's souls forsaken leaveth.

6.

From snares, which they've for me laid, do Thou keep  
me—

The pit-falls of iniquity's proud workers !  
How wicked feet into their own nets slip, see !  
While the escape of mine Jehovah furthers.

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PSALM CXLII.

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TITLE.

*A Psalm of David giving instruction ; a prayer when he was  
in the cave.*

The cave here referred to I take to be that mentioned in 1 Sam. xxiv., and, rather than think David composed the fifty-seventh psalm, and this, on the same subject in a time of such unsettled shifts, it seems to me preferable to assume that he wrote this in the latter part of his life, when pondering on the opportunity taken by the Spirit of Christ to foreshadow things that should be done to Christ, and to the people of Christ, after the similitude of his own hiding himself and his men in the sides of the cave, when Saul lay asleep therein.

On referring to that psalm it will be found that by Saul reduced to inactivity in sleep the Holy Spirit is considered to have foreshadowed what should be the prostration of Satan in remorse at the part he had taken in procuring, contrary to law, the crucifixion of the Son of David : and that by David's hiding of

himself and men in the cave's sides, Christ's hiding of Himself in the grave, and subsequently His people's hiding of themselves therein, were foretokened, until God's wrath should be past. (Isa. xvi. 20.)

It is also to be gathered from the tenour of this psalm, that David in writing it had special regard to this mystical application of his former psalm; in the hope of providing a prayer for his Son's use at that time, as also for the use of those that in every generation should through faith in his Son be one with Him.

Owing to David being the progenitor of Messiah, he could by anticipation speak of what should be done unto his Son, as done unto himself. In proof hereof witness his words in the last verse, where we assume that he, in saying "my soul," speaks primarily of Christ's; as St. Peter shews in Acts ii. 25—31, that he certainly did in Ps. xvi. 9—11: whereas other prophets, such as Isaiah, speaking of Christ, would say (xxvi. 19) "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise."

Again, secondarily, David aimed at supplying in this prayer, help for such of his descendants or fellow-countrymen as should be of one spirit with himself concerning his Son, through all time forthcoming, until his Son's triumphal gathering of Israel into the Lord's land.

Viewed in these two ways the psalm before us follows up what the Holy Ghost had taught in psalm lvii. concerning Christ in the grave until His resurrection; and the people of Christ therein until theirs.

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#### ARGUMENT.

The sufferings of the Lord Jesus during the passion week, as recorded in the four Gospels, shew us how the Son of David might have made every verse in this 142nd psalm His own.

For the language of the third verse might then be fitly taken up by Him; as may be seen by comparing therewith Matt. xxvi.

For truly "His Spirit was overwhelmed within Him" under the burden of our sins. And "God alone knew His path," "Who would not suffer Him to be tempted above that He was able." (1 Cor. x. 13; Isa. lvii. 16; Luke xxii. 43.)

Moreover, He of His own accord descended into the grave, until His Father's wrath should be past (John x. 17, 18), as David with his men went into the cave's sides; while Satan, of his own accord, in horror at what might ensue to himself for the part he had taken in prompting men to bring Christ thereto, cast himself into a state of remorse producing suspension of hostility; being in search of soul-rest; as Saul went into the same cave with David for bodily rest.

Also the language of the fourth verse (by comparing therewith Ps. lxxxviii., and John xvi. 32) is seen to admit of adaptation

to Christ. For at His agony in the garden, and crucifixion, not only was there "none of the people" (Isa. lxi. 3) with Him (also Isa. lix. 12—18); but among the beings of a higher order, "who desire to search into the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 11, 12)—who were appointed to learn their lesson concerning the amount of duty due from a holy creature to the Creator by "seeing" Christ's obedience to His Father (Heb. v. 7, 8, and 1 Tim. iii. 16)—all stood aloof from Him in consternation at the awful accumulation of sins laid upon the Sufferer in the course of His Father's providence; from which He would not be separated in the judgment that should be pronounced on His people as well as on Himself, because of His Father having at outset given them to Him by a covenant of marriage, whereof that between Adam and Eve was a type! (Ephes. v. 23—33; Gen. ii. 21—25; Mark x. 6—9.)

Agreeably with this view of the extent whereto this psalm admits of adaptation by Christ to what things should be done unto Him, it is to be observed that there is no word in the original corresponding to 'man,' which occurs twice in our authorised version of this fourth verse, but simply 'none,' by which I claim to be understood nor man nor angel.

In verse 5, "the land of the living," as applied to Christ, must bear the same signification as in Ps. xxvii. 4 and 13; where "the goodness of the Lord" is to be understood to denote what the Father would do for them that went down to their graves with faith in His promise concerning Christ (see Ps. xxv. 13: according to the marginal correction of our authorised version): hence the meaning of "goodness" as applied to Christ in Ps. xxi. 3, 4, is clearly seen to refer to what the Father should do for Him after death. Also the prayer in verse 9, when looked on as offered by Christ, may be considered to have been signally answered in the Father's instantaneously rising up to change His Son's manhood from natural to spiritual, upon His Son's committal of His Spirit into His hands. (1 Cor. xv. 44—46; 1 John v. 6—9; compare Ps. xxii. 16—21.)

By reason of this liberation of Christ's soul (according to the prayer in the seventh verse as applied to Him) by the Father's change of it into "a quickening spirit," a way, which no man nor angel dared to conceive, was found by the Father for upholding His own law, touching the death of the soul that sinneth; while simultaneously vindicating the perfection of "His own goodness" in not allowing any creature who should in obedience to Him suffer adversity, as His Son had, to be eventually a loser.

Although the souls of the elect were in strictness of justice forfeited through sin original and actual; yet by way of reprisal upon Satan for the excess into which men had at his instigation run against Christ—the holy One and the just—by putting Him to death (against Whom, as being sinless, the law gave

them no authority to do so), it pleased the Father to grant Him the elect souls, that had been made His by a covenant of marriage, by way of a recompense.

To this purpose of the Father in bringing Christ's soul into the prison of the grave, reference seems to be made in the subsequent clauses of this seventh verse, when looked on as used by David's Son. For Christ desired to be raised up again in our nature, that He might therein accomplish the will of His Father concerning us, as testified in Ps. xl. 7—10. (See also Ps. xxii. 22.)

In this sense are we to understand, that He should look for "the righteous to compass Him about;" when, to use the language of Isaiah, liii. 2, "By His knowledge should He—the righteous Servant—justify many; for He should bear their iniquities." (See also Isa. xlv. 24, 25, and Jer. xxiii. 1—8.)

Therefore should the Lord—His Father—"divide Him a portion with the great, and He should divide the spoil with the strong" (Luke xi. 21); and in this way should the last clause of this 142nd psalm find its fulfilment in the Son of David, "for Thou shalt deal bountifully with me," or, requite me bounteously, by granting Me to "see of the travail of My soul, till I shall be satisfied." (Isa. liii. 11.)

Again, in the secondary sense, this psalm was intended by David, as we think, to furnish such of his descendants and fellow-countrymen as should, like himself, hope in his Son, with language of pious supplication in the hour of death; on which account this psalm seems to us peculiarly fitted for the dying Christian's use; as we have already observed that the 121st appears to be.

Its strain of pathetic entreaty, viewed in this light, seems a fitting counterpart to Ps. xxvii.

It is our belief that while angels transport the believer's spirit instantaneously upon death to paradise (Luke xvi. 22), his soul, though separate from the body, is laid asleep along with the small seed thereof in the grave, there to be "in prison," as it were, in the womb of the earth, (whence Job's language, "Naked came I forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither," ch. i. 21)—the patriarch viewing his mother as but one remove above the earth, whence (as God said) Adam was originally taken. (Gen. iii. 19.)

From this likening of the grave to a womb—we meet, in Isa. liv. 1, with the expression that the birth of Christ in Zion from the grave, should be without birth-pangs; or as St. Peter said in Acts ii. 24, compared with Ps. xviii. 5, the birth-pangs were loosed.

When David in Ps. xvi. 10, said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, or the grave"—he implied that it should for a certain space be there. Hence the like is believed to be the case with

all other souls of righteous men. (See Ps. xlix. 15, and Job xiv. 12—17.) In this sense, therefore, the dying Christian can, as we conceive, find unspeakable comfort in the making the language of the 7th verse of Ps. cxlii. his own: saying—

“Bring my soul out of prison”—the prison of the grave—  
“when Thy wrath be past,” (Isa. xxvi. 20)—“that I may praise  
**Thy Name.**”

Assuredly it is for the Lord’s Name’s sake, that He is to be relied on to do this for us: as indeed it has already been shewn that He did the like for His Son. (Ps. xxiii. 3.)

In that glad day each that shall have gone down to the grave alone, shall find himself compassed about with a company countless as the spangles of dew in early morning. (Ps. cx. 3; and xc. 13—17.)

## 1.

Thee, O Jehovah, I aloud  
Implor’d! to Thee pour’d out my prayer;  
Jehovah! ’neath what ills I bow’d,  
My voice did plaintively declare!

## 2.

When in my spirit all was dark,<sup>1</sup>  
My secret path<sup>2</sup> was known to Thee.  
For in my journey Thou didst mark,  
What snares therein they’d laid for me.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 3. Compare Isa. l. 9—11. The Father made this darkness, (Jer. xlii. 15—17) by forbearing publicly to declare His judgment concerning Christ’s committal of His Spirit into His hands until the third day; although He instantaneously arose to judgment in the secrecy of the Divine nature, by changing His Son’s Soul into a quickening Spirit, as the water conjoined with the blood flowing forth from the Saviour’s side while yet on the cross betokened. (John xix. 33—37.)

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 3. There is a distinction to be observed between נְתִיבָתִי “my path,” and מַדְרֵגָה “the way:” by this latter I take to be meant man’s course in the mortal body, according to nature, as in Job xxii. 15, upon which in Ps. cxxxix. 24, Horsley says מַדְרֵגָה is the way, right or wrong, in which a man actually goes by habit. The former word, for “my path,” I take to refer darkly to the purpose of the Father to deliver His Son’s soul, forfeited for our souls, by creating it a quickening spirit—a mystery, shadowed forth, as I conceive, by

3.

Upon the right hand I beheld  
 No helper on my side to be.  
 No one would know me—refuge fail'd—  
 None for my soul a way could see !<sup>3</sup>

4.

To Thee, Jehovah, I applied,  
 Thou, Thou, I said, my refuge art !  
 No other can for me decide,  
 'Mongst them that live,<sup>4</sup> my destin'd part.

5.

Steep'd as I am in misery—  
 Indulgently observe my cry !  
 From mine accusers<sup>5</sup> rescue me—  
 Accusers bolder far than I !

the two goats in Levit. xvi. 7—one for a sin-offering and one for a scape-goat, verse 10, whose way was into *γῆν ἄβυσσος*, verse 21. See Isa. liii. 10, second clause. "The way wherein the Saviour walked," was one whereto the enemy could have access to lay snares ; but the path known to God, was one not so to be reached—"hidden"—as in Ps. xxvii. 5 ; xci. 1 ; Col. iii. 3 ; "The way of escape" (1 Cor. x. 13).

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 4. שׁוֹאֵל None was "enquiring" for my soul, that is, of God: owing to the awful nature of the work laid on the Son of David to conclude with His Father, no created being, even among angels, could presume to speak with God, upon that subject.

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 5. Compare Ps. xci. 15, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 6. The strength of Satan and his agents—the accusers of Christ and Christ's people—is explained by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 56, where he saith the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. From Heb. ii. 14, we learn that Satan hath or had the power of death according to law—which saith, the soul that sinneth it shall die : and though Christ had not sinned, yet the souls of the elect had ; from which, as His betrothed bride, Christ would not be separated in the judgment. But wicked men by involving Satan in punishment of Christ with death, exceeded the power that he had by law against sinners.

Again, by Heb. v. 7, 8, St. Paul shows us that the very perfection of Christ's sacrificial death as a man for us—consisted in His not reckoning His perfect service in mortal flesh to be a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction unto His Father for the outrage done to His Divine Majesty by the sins of mankind.

But our Advocate committed Himself unto Him that judgeth righteously, Who will not make the righteous as the wicked, (Gen. xviii. 23) and "He was heard in that He feared !"



## 6.

Bring forth my soul from out this stress,  
 That I Thy Name may praise aright.<sup>6</sup>  
 So righteous ones shall round me press,  
 For to my fill<sup>7</sup> Thou'lt me requite.

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 7. Ps. xl. 9, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. liii. 11, the word for "deal bountifully" means to "requite." (Ps. cxvi. 7; Ps. cxxxvii. 8.)

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 PSALM CXLIII.

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 TITLE.

A Psalm for the beloved.

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## ARGUMENT.

A careful consideration of the several verses of this psalm in their order will enable one the better to judge for what purpose it was written, after which may be seen how it is to be worthily used by us.

In the first words, "Hear my prayer," it is worthy of remark, that the word in this place for prayer is one denoting prayer through an Advocate אֲדוֹנָי; thus supplying what had been looked for in Ps. cxxx. 2, when a precisely similar confession was to follow, and had not been found.

The next clauses should be translated, "Give ear unto my supplications in Thy faithfulness, answer me in Thy righteousness."

By 1 Cor. x. 13, we find that since "God is faithful, in not suffering us to be tempted above that we are able," to "hear our supplications in faithfulness" is to protect us from being inordinately punished: while, in regard to "answering us in His righteousness," the testimony in Ps. cxxix. 4, to the effect that "The Lord is righteous, and hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked," denotes, that His righteousness will move Him to put it out of an oppressor's power to do us further hurt. (Isa. li. 12—16.)

The prayer in the next verse, like that in Ps. cxxx. 3, sets forth the utter impossibility of mortal man being just with God. (Job

ix. 2.) Only in Ps. cxxx. 3, the psalmist did not explain how he nevertheless did stand justified; whereas here by use of *הִצְלַחְתִּי*, verse 1, he doth this.

Hence the psalmist prays as one that stands or "lives" by faith in the power with God possessed by his Advocate—the Days-man, that can lay His hand upon us both (Job ix. 33; the Redeemer, xix. 25; the Interpreter, xxxiii. 23); for Whose sake God can consistently with His inflexible justice and unalterable hatred of sin, forbear from charging our sins on us, if it so please Him, to the utmost extent that He might. (Heb. vi. 16—20.)

Hence, as St. Paul saith in Rom. viii. 10, "if Christ be in you, the body—the mortal man—is dead because of sin (Rom. vii. 18), but the Spirit, to wit—the quickening spirit of Christ for our renewal day by day unto life is granted us in answer to our prayer in this body of death (Rom. vii. 24), because of righteousness"—Christ our Advocate's righteousness—now made ours through incorporation with Him in His sacrificial death (John v. 24; 1 Cor. xii. 13); but in the psalmist's time, under the Mosaic covenant, communicated by the Holy Ghost to the believer in Christ through participation in His Spirit. (2 Pet. i. 4.) Thus the man that in himself must say, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified," can say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." (Isa. xlv. 24, 25.)

For renewal with Christ's Spirit incorporates or identifies us with Him therein. (See John viii. 34—36.)

In the third and fourth verses, where the psalmist describes the sorrow weighing down his spirit, it is to be observed, that no expression leads us to think it proceeded from one groaning under conscious sin; but rather from assaults of outward enemies—say spiritual enemies—destroyers of his peace, because involving him in constant strife against their suggestions. This is the class of enemies referred to throughout this psalm; and this observation leads us to conclude, that this psalm was composed for the use of one who, like Paul in 1 Cor. iv. 4, could say, "Though I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified." Exactly as was observed in Ps. cxxx. 3.

Now that such an one may in God's faithfulness be afflicted after the manner described in verses 3 and 4, is to be seen in Paul's case, in 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. The way in which such affliction is to be borne is set forth in verses 5 and 6; which wonderfully illustrate our Lord's words in Luke xviii. 1, and exemplify Isaiah's in l. 10.

Whether or not there be ascertainable by us any profitable distinction between the three branches of meditation specified in verse 5, it is useful to observe that, under all circumstances, the following threefold division of meditation is of fundamental

importance ; namely, to remember what God hath in times past, from man's creation and fall, done in our behalf :

Secondly, to meditate on what He hath wrought in us, if we be created anew in Christ unto good works :

Thirdly, to muse on what God will have done by us in His strength, when so renewed : which also is " His work," as Isaiah testifies in chapter xviii. 12.

For on this point St Paul saith, in Philip. iv. 12, 13, " I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me."

The resemblance between this fifth verse of the psalm before us and the eleventh and twelfth of Ps. lxxvii. suggests the idea, that the author of this psalm had that in his eye ; also in writing the next verse, the similarity thereof to the first of the sixty-third, leads one to suppose he had that in mind ; where it is to be observed that a ruggedness produced in verse 1 of Ps. lxxiii. by חִיץ in the masculine (which severs it from חִיץ is here obviated by this word being in the feminine חִיץ.

The stretching forth of the hands is an act expressive of intense earnestness (Exod. ix. 33), while the likening of the soul to thirsty ground denotes that the worshipper would fain drink in God's grace, as that soil the rain. (Isa. xlv. 8.)

To this is appended Selah, after the manner of the Davidic psalms.

The psalm is also hereby divided into two equal portions.

A further plea for a petitioner to urge, when situate as the psalmist, is lest his spirit should otherwise fail : as God Himself indicates by the mouth of Isa. in lvii. 15, 16, and as the Lord Jesus Himself experienced in His agony, when but for the help of an angel (Luke xxii. 43) His spirit would have failed. (Heb. v. 7.)

For in death there is no remembrance of Thee, saith the psalmist in vi. 5, meaning in regard to the believer's body, where-with is his person.

" The morning " referred to in the eighth verse, in which the psalmist desires to hear God's voice (Job xiv. 15), is that of the resurrection. (Ps. xlix. 14.)

But it is at the time of the resurrection actually to take place on earth, as foretold in Isa. xxvi. 19, and sung of in Psalm cxlix. 5—9.

The petition in verse 5, " Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies," is a very different one from that in Ps. xxxix. 8, " Deliver me from all mine offences : " shewing that the enemies here spoken of were foreign from oneself—*e.g.*, agents of Satan, whom he in heart was withstanding, though sore bestead and weary.

The petition, " I hide me with Thee," verse 9, is a reference to the shelter there is for the believer in the holy place of the true tabernacle, where he may abide in peace (Ps. xxvii. 5, 6), betaking himself to the hope set before him. (Heb. vi. 18—20.)

The words in verse 10, "Thou art my God," are a second reference to Ps. lxi. 1, where may be seen the significance of the psalmist's protestation; "Thou art *my* God."

"The land of uprightness," verse 10, is that millennial state of the Lord's inheritance (Isa. xxxv.) into which that chosen generation of Abraham's descendants shall, after due preparation and much sorrow patiently endured, be brought by the good hand of God, in the morning above referred to—the occasion being more fully treated in Isa. xxvi. 10.

In verses 11, 12, prayers for renewal with the Spirit of God, not for the worthiness of one's works done in holiness of heart, but for God's name's sake (1 Sam. xii. 22), is in keeping with this petitioner's prayer in the first verse through his Advocate, and confession in the second verse of inability to justify himself before God; though the tenour of the psalm implies, that as far as man might plead his perfectness of heart (Isa. xxxviii. 3, and James iv. 8), this worshipper was in a position to urge it.

Now in regard to the purpose for which this psalm was primarily written, on looking at the eminent holiness implied to be in the worshipper amidst all his tribulations, it might be thought (as some commentators have contended) that it was designed for the use of the Lord Jesus Himself in the days of His flesh.

And there are sundry expressions which have had their fulfilment in Him more closely than in anyone else; but that use in the first verse of the word, implying prayer through an Advocate, precludes the idea of its having been intended for the use of Christ Himself.

It seems to me rather to be primarily intended for that chosen generation of Israel which shall in the latter day be called in an especial manner to fellowship with Christ in His sufferings (Col. i. 24), preparatory to their "hearing His voice in the morning," and being "led into the land of uprightness." (Isa. lx. 21.)

Thus explained, this psalm appears to me to be one of many which, at the close of this last book of the psalms, seems to be prepared for the use of that latter generation in Israel. (Ps. lxxviii. 4, 6.)

In this sense, as intended for the members of Christ's mystical body, in whom the promises concerning the inheritance shall be realised by Him (Isa. liii. 11; 2 Thess. i. 10) this psalm may be, without wresting the meaning of the title, taken to be "for the Beloved," as already often explained; though not for the Beloved's own Personal use.

This then being assumed to be the primary purpose for which the psalm hath been provided, it is in a secondary sense a truly precious directory in prayer to eminently holy persons of our age under heavy affliction, through no sins of their own (that their conscience specially accuses them with); but through the tribu-

lation that all must endure that will live godly in Christ Jesus ; and particularly towards the close of our times. (See 2 Tim. iv. 1.) Like to that in John xvi. 20, wherewith may be compared Jer. xxx. 5—22.

It remains therefore for such eminently holy sufferers to be especially careful about making prayer through their Advocate, as implied in the first words of this psalm :

And in accordance with the second verse, to be watchful against self-righteousness ; as the labourers in the vineyard from the first hours were not (Matt. xx. 1—16.) :

And to abide with Christ under the tribulation, according to verse 9, appointed for one "in faithfulness" (1 Pet. v. 6—8) :

And to ask every blessing of God for His Name's sake, according to His promise in Ps. xxiii. 3.

## 1.

The prayer that through my Advocate I plead,  
O hear, Jehovah ! in thy faithfulness ;  
To mine entreaties grant attentive heed ;  
Vouchsafe an answer in Thy righteousness ;  
Nor into judgment bring my soul with Thee,  
For none that live, in Thy sight just shall be !

## 2.

Sore hath the enemy my soul oppress'd,  
Down in the dust my life, of faith, to tread.  
Appalling darkness hath my soul possess'd,  
As those that long since went down to the dead ;  
For this my spirit mourns its lonesome state—  
My heart within me is disconsolate.

## 3.

The days of old I to remembrance call,  
On all Thy works I pensive meditate ;  
Devoutly muse I on what work I shall  
Through Thy help finish : then I elevate  
To Thee my hands, and like a thirsty land  
I in my soul for thee expectant stand. Selah !

4.

O speedily, Jehovah, hear my cry,  
 My spirit faileth! from me do not hide  
 Thy face, lest reft of sense and reason, I  
 Be as unfit to pray, as tho' I'd died!  
 O cause me in Thy morning's dawn to hear  
 Thy loving-kindness, Thou that art my Fear!<sup>1</sup>

5.

Cause me the way, that I should keep, to know,  
 For I my soul do lift up unto Thee!  
 Deliver me, Jehovah, from the foe:  
 I hide me in Thy temple's secrecy.<sup>2</sup>  
 Unto Thy will do Thou my heart incline,  
 For Thee I'll early seek, Thou God of mine!

6.

Good is Thy Spirit! to my longing view  
 Let it unfold the land of uprightness!  
 For Thy Name's sake, Jehovah, me renew!  
 Snatch me from trouble through Thy righteous-  
 ness:  
 And do Thou all mine enemies destroy,  
 For in Thy service I myself employ.

<sup>1</sup> Verse 8. Gen. xxxi. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 9. Ps. xxi. 5, and xxvi. 20..

## PSALM CXLIV.

## TITLE.

A Psalm of David.

There are manifestly many extracts in this psalm from earlier ones.

Thus verses 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, and 11 are substantially taken from Ps. xviii. 34, 2, 14, 16, 43, 49. The expression "the people," in verse 42, being in this 144th psalm at verse 2, changed to "my people." Again, the third verse is taken from Ps. viii. 4; the fourth from Ps. xxxix. 5.

In verse 10 Archbishop Secker suggests that לַמַּלְכִּי should be read for לַמַּלְכִּי, which would bring this verse into close agreement with Ps. xviii. 50.

On the supposition, then, that David, agreeably with the title, wrote this psalm, we assume, as already stated in commenting on the title of the hundred and forty-first, that the royal psalmist in his later years dwelt on the references to Christ which he had in process of time learnt by the Holy Ghost to have been imported in what he, in the first instance, wrote upon occasion of some personal trouble of his own.

## ARGUMENT.

The burden of the contents is to be found in the midst of it, which consists of seven verses—from the 5th to the end of the 11th—having four verses to precede and four to follow.

Christ is to be regarded as here pleading before His Father in the persons of His mystical members (as appears from the expression "My people," in verse 2), after the manner in which David makes Him do the like in Ps. xl.

The psalmist's own people, indeed, expected but one coming of Messiah, when "He would abide alway" (John xii. 34); and that consequently His coming should be marked with the lightning darted forth from His throne, as in Ps. l.

But we, who live at this late stage in the Church's progress, have learnt that the first coming of the Lord in great humility, in the days of His mortal flesh, to His own people, was to be followed by their rejection of Him, preached, at His desire, to them first after His resurrection; and that they should for this draw down on them, for a predetermined period, national rejection.

Accordingly, we find this psalm to be emphatically fitted for use of Christ's mystical members, gathered out of Jews and Gentiles by election in this first age of the kingdom of heaven;

after the same manner in which the fortieth psalm is proved to be.

Hence it is to be understood, in the first four verses, that Christ, in the persons of the elect of this age, records before His Father dependence on Him to draw souls unto Him, (John vi. 44) by the rod of His strength (Ps. cx. 2), without reliance on earthly powers for advancement thereof: for that the gospel shall eventually be so declined from and overlaid with traditional usages subversive of it, as to finally fill up the measure of the iniquity of the Gentiles so abusing that privilege (Luke xxi. 24, Gen. xv. 16); causing the elect of this age to cry earnestly for the coming of the Lord a second time. (Luke xviii. 1—8.)

That coming again we have reason to believe, from examination of 2 Thess. i. 6—10, to be the same with this referred to in verses 5, 6 of the psalm before us: when the beast and the false prophet shall be cast into the abyss of hell from before the presence of the Lord, at the manifestation of His sign in heaven at Jerusalem; according to Matt. xxiv. 30, and Rev. xix. 11—24.

On this supposition "great waters," in verse 7, will mean much people; for which "strange children" are a synonym—being those of this age, who by sacramental title claim to be "children of God" (as did the Jews before our Saviour, in John viii. 37); but "strange" because not "of His Spirit" (Rom. viii. 9; Ephes. ii. 12.)

The description of them by "a mouth speaking vanity, and a right hand which is a right hand of falsehood," refers to their teachers "speaking lies in hypocrisy" (1 Tim. iv. 1—6, and 2 Thess. ii. 8—12), which they scruple not to commend with solemn appeals to God to witness their truth—oaths being made among the Jews in the psalmist's time with lifting up of "the right hand" when repeating the substance of the oath. (Deut. xxxii. 40.)

"The new song," mentioned in verse 9, may be taken for that which Christ's Spirit shall teach His redeemed to sing at the ushering in of the new age in the kingdom of heaven (see Rev. xv. 1—4), when the salvation promised David—the Beloved—shall of "the zeal of the Lord of hosts" be fully granted (Luke i. 74, 75); after which shall follow great plenty in the Lord's land, according to Joel ii. 21—26 and Hosea ii. 21—23, agreeably with the prayer in the last four verses of the psalm before us.

1.

Be Thou, my Strength,<sup>1</sup> Jehovah, blest !  
Who mak'st my hands the sword to wield,  
And fingers poise the lance in war.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 2. Isa. viii. 13, 14.



300 PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH.

My Sanctu'ry, wherein to rest!  
My Tow'r! Deliverer! and Shield!  
Who dost my people to me draw.<sup>2</sup>

2.

That Thou of man should'st knowledge take,  
What, O Jehovah, what is he?  
Or what the son of man, that Thou  
Of him so great account should'st make?  
Man's life is like to vanity—  
His pomp—an evanescent show.

3.

Oh, be Thy heav'ns, Jehovah, bow'd!  
Come in celestial glory bright,  
And let the mountain of each realm  
Mount, at Thy touch, a smoky cloud!  
Let lightnings scathe them in their flight,  
And bolts in fiery sleet o'erwhelm!

4.

From Thy high dwelling do Thou stretch  
Thy hand down, out of waters great—  
Strange children's hand—to rescue me!  
Who, often as their breath their fetch  
For speech, but only folly prate,  
And brag of falsehood lustily.

5.

Then a new song, O God, to Thee  
I'll sing, and with the ten-string'd chords  
Of psaltery<sup>3</sup> Thy praise forth send;  
How that to God the victory  
For Kings belongs, Who from men's swords  
His servant David will defend.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 2. John vi. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 9. By 2 Sam. vi, 5, "the psaltery" is proved to have been an instrument; and here, by its being called *תִּשְׁתֵּי*, one of ten strings.

6.

Oh, snatch me from strange children's pow'r,  
Who boast in vain, presumptuous tones,  
And lift the hand in perjury.  
Then shall our youth spring as the flow'r—  
Our daughters, as the corner-stones  
Of palaces, in symmetry.

7.

Then shall our garners overflow  
With varied stores; and sheep, possess'd  
In thousands, breed; while many a share  
Stout oxen draw; and peoples know  
Good government. Oh, race thrice blest,  
Whose boast is, ye Jchovah's are!

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PSALM CXLV.

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David's (Psalm of) praise.

He to whom was vouchsafed in the earlier period of his life, as we gather from the ninth and tenth psalms, a prophetic anticipation of the opposition to his Son's kingdom; at the close of his life, as we gather from the seventy-second psalm, had glorious anticipations vouchsafed him of Messiah's reign. Under the gladdening influence of such anticipations, it is to be concluded that he likewise composed this psalm, which eventually found its suitable place in the inspired roll of psalms. For it is prefixed to the last five, which are all songs of praise to God; some of which, such as the hundred and forty-sixth and ninth, can only be sung with full realization of the promised triumph under Messiah, at His return to reign over Israel in His own land; while others, such as the hundred and forty-seventh and eighth, which speak of God's bounty to Israel in bestowal of the fruits of the earth, can then only in their fullest sense be enjoyed; as may be seen in Hosea ii. 20—22; Joel ii. 21—27.

Thus this last book closes, like the preceding ones, with reference to the coming of Christ, and this hundred and forty-fifth is a suitable exordium for them.

This mystically constructed psalm is acrostic, having every

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fresh verse beginning with a fresh letter of the Hebrew alphabet in their order, omitting the Nun.

### ARGUMENT.

In the very first line the psalmist seems to address Christ, Who is God, as the King then present in glorified humanity.

This King, who is called Elohi in the first verse, is in the 3rd, and thenceforward through the rest of the psalm, called Jehovah.

It may be easily conceived with what rapture the service described in the first two verses will be rendered by devout Israelites to their manifest King and God. The language of the sixth verse would, on the above supposition, describe what shall be the general impression on mankind *after* the "terrible" acts spoken of in Ps. lvi. 5 shall have become matters of history. (See Rom. ix. 17, and 22—23.)

In the 7th verse those "terrible" acts are spoken of as destined to be subjects of retrospective reverence to the latest posterity.

At the 6th verse the psalmist speaks of the King's acts, as to be extolled for their "terribleness:" and at the 7th for their "great goodness" withal, and "their righteousness."

Then, from the 8th verse to the 14th inclusive, the goodness of the Lord's acts seems to be dwelt on; and from the 15th to the end, their righteousness.

Thus, this psalm of twenty-one verses, being distinguished into three portions of seven verses, treats in succession of the terribleness of God's acts,, their goodness, and their righteousness.

In regard to what is said in verse 10, it may be observed, that while irrational and inanimate works of God may, by the very sight of their intrinsic perfection, praise Him (as the deeds of the virtuous woman are, in Prov. xxxi. 31, said to praise her in the gate) the rational ones alone can "bless" Him: for to "bless," as we see in Ps. c. 4, is to "speak good of His Name."

His works must be of the intelligent order, gifted with speech, to admit of this service. Of those among men so endowed, but few comparatively are at present born in the course of providence where they have opportunity, by means of revealed truth, to learn this duty. And again, of those born within the sound of the Gospel, how comparatively small a portion are at any one time in this present age of the kingdom of heaven disposed so to do!

At the time anticipated in this psalm it is asserted, that there shall be a manifest improvement in this respect; though (as we gather from verse 6) there will still be a distinction between the unconverted and the saints, or sanctified.

The sanctified are they who, through faith in the gospel, confessing their lost state by nature, penitently ask for, in the

Name of the Lord the King, and obtain of God, renewal with His Spirit.

These, and these alone, are fitted to render heartily and intelligently the service of blessing spoken of in verse 10.

It behoves us who in the course of God's providence have had our birth appointed in a land where revealed truth is fully proclaimed, to forestall, as God shall enable us, the worship in that age of the kingdom of heaven which is here described. Though we of this age be awakened by God's grace to wait on God, in the name of our Divine King, for pardon and renewal with the Spirit of adoption from day to day; yet great stedfastness is required in order to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.

For our times are obstructive hereto by distraction of the mind.

It may, however, be gathered out of Scripture, that from the beginning of time this trial of stedfastness had to be encountered by them that would live godly.

Hence, in Gen. xviii. 18, we have God's commendation of Abraham for his singular consistency in this matter.

In Josh. xxv. 14, 15, we have an exemplification of the like by that great Captain of Israel.

But in 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, we have an instance of Joash's weakness in this respect, owing to the pressure brought to bear on him by the princes of his kingdom. The act of blessing God, as described in verse 10, may be taken to include all direct acts of worship that shall be rendered to the Lord at His return; while what is mentioned in verses 11, 12, 13, about the saints, at that good time coming, stirring up the sons of men to seek acquaintance with Him, by talking of His power, His might, and the majesty of His kingdom, refers to labours of an evangelistic and missionary character to be then undertaken, out of gratitude, on His account. If saints will at this time laudably concern themselves in the same occupation, their first duty will be to heed the Lord's statute in Deut. vi. 6—9, which charges them to speak with one another concerning the words of God's holy Scripture, so as to acquire a facility in expressing their thoughts thereon, for improvement of themselves in fitness to persuade their fellow-men.

The tongue is indeed reclaimed to its worthiest use when employed on so exalted a theme, with so benevolent an aim. To such the record of Missionary labours will commend itself, as exemplifying the power wherewith the Gospel is now, as in the days of the apostles, made "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.)

## 1.

Thee I'll extol in song, my God, the King!  
 Thy Name for ever and for ever bless!  
 Within me day by day considering  
 What praise in worship I'll to Thee address.  
 Great is Jehovah! who'll aright express  
 What is His worth? His sov'reign majesty  
 Transcends conception! tongues from age to age  
 Thy dreaded acts shall gladly certify;  
 Yea, with what deeds of terror history's page  
 Thou marked'st, when Thou quelled'st rebels' rage,<sup>1</sup>  
 And to redeem Thy saints didst righteously engage.

## 2.

Jehovah gracious is, compassionate,  
 To anger slow, for mercy eminent;  
 Jehovah's good, and doth commiserate,  
 All He hath made, wherein they're indigent.  
 To Thee shall all Thy works be ministrant  
 Of praise, Jehovah! Thee Thy saints shall bless!  
 Their talk shall be about Thy kingdom's pow'r,  
 To make the sons of men their fear confess  
 Of His dread kingdom, and His Name adore.  
 His kingdom reacheth all creation o'er,  
 And through all generations lasteth evermore!

## 3.

Jehovah doth, all those that fall, upraise.  
 To Him all eyes are turn'd; in season due  
 Their meat Thou giv'st them; and Thine hand displays  
 Wide-open'd what shall each one's strength renew!  
 In all His works Jehovah doth pursue  
 The course of righteousness and holiness.  
 Jehovah, unto all that on Him call—  
 That call on Him in truth—doth grant access.<sup>2</sup>  
 Jehovah, them that love Him, saves; but shall  
 The wicked slay. Jehovah I'll extol,  
 And be His holy Name for ever blessed by all!

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 6. Compare David's words to the same effect in Ps. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 18. See Ephes. iii. 12.

## PSALM CXLVI.

### ARGUMENT.

Before stating what commentators think to have been the most probable occasion of this psalm being written, certain words therein may with advantage be previously considered.

Firstly, in the 3rd verse, where we read—

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.”

Here “the son of man,” is literally in Hebrew “in a son of Adam,” and the original word here translated “help” is “salvation;” as the margin testifies.

It would appear that this word is in our authorised version translated “help” to point a contrast between “a son of Adam” in whom is no help (verse 3), and the God of Jacob in Whom there is help (verse 5). Compare Ps. cviii. 12.

It would however have been much better to let the inspired psalmist speak for himself. To say that there is no help in princes or in a son of Adam, is at first sight not likely to receive an unqualified assent from any one. But to say, as did the psalmist, that the valid reason for not putting trust in princes nor in any son of Adam is, because there is no salvation in him—that is, he hath it not to give—is what agrees with the voice of Christ elsewhere in Scripture, and commends itself to the child of God. For one of the earliest enquiries of the awakened sinner is, “What shall I do to be saved?” (Acts xvi. 30); and Christ Himself saith on this point, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” (Matt. vi. 33.) And again: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

This rendering of the word for “help” makes the psalmist here teach that no consideration of the worldly advantages to be gained by the favour of princes or of any son of Adam is to make us lose sight of that enquiry which is of paramount importance—How am I to serve God, of Whom alone in Christ cometh salvation?

We are to be ready to let go any prospects of advancement in this world how flattering soever, which would be inconsistent with our prime pursuit of salvation.

By “a son of Adam,” is here meant one, who remains till death in the fallen state wherein he was born; though placed (as was the psalmist) within the sound of God’s revealed truth, and within the bond of the covenant of grace.

Reference seems here tacitly made to God's sentence on our first parent Adam, when for his sin declared to be characterised by the lower part of him—that taken from the ground—Adamah; on which account he was worthily called Adam.

Hence God said in Gen. iii. 19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou art; and unto dust shalt thou return."

The body of Adam was taken from the ground, and by yielding to temptation he gave that lower part the ascendancy over his soul and his spirit, which he also had; which were breathed into him by God. (Gen. ii. 7; 1 Thess. v. 23.)

We hence see that from the earliest stage in our history God characterizes us by that part of us which we in the soul permit by our own consent to be dominant. (Gen. ii. 7; Jer. xxxviii. 16.)

At the time of the sentence being pronounced on Adam, he had so recently heard the gospel concerning the Christ to be born of woman, that he could hardly be called a believer in it: but the condemnation pronounced upon him in his fallen state "shut him up" to faith therein, as the only hope of the "salvation" spoken of in this third verse. (Gal. iii. 23.)

We firmly believe that Adam put faith in that promise concerning Christ; so as to be made by the Holy Ghost a child of God through faith therein (Gen. iii. 20, vi. 1—3), and thus an enjoyer of "hope in the Lord his God." (Verse 5 of this psalm.) But as progenitor of the race descending from him in the course of nature, he could only leave his name for a token of what remained to him to bequeath to them; to wit, his condemnation under the broken law. See the emphatic contrast between verse 1 and 3 of Gen. v.

What it seems to me then that the psalmist states in this third verse is, that he who in spite of the opportunities afforded him by God's providence of hearing and choosing in his soul the fear of the Lord, according to revealed truth, abides to his death in his unconverted, unrenewed, natural, state of mind; be he a prince, he is but "a son of Adam"—a child of a fallen progenitor, receiving his denomination before God from the lower part of him taken from the ground.

In the next verse (verse 4) is stated what comes of this obstinate, self-complacent, impenitence:—

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish!"

Here the word for "breath" ordinarily means spirit, when spoken in reference to man. See Eccles. xii. 7, where we read "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it."

Accepting then the amended translation, "His spirit goeth

forth," let it be observed how this admonishes us of this son of Adam, notwithstanding the denomination received from the lower part of him, nevertheless having, equally with the brother who through faith becomes the child of God, a soul and a spirit; which respectively go to the state and place appointed by God for each of either sort.

On this point let there be compared herewith, what the Lord Jesus testifies concerning the spirit of the rich man and that of Lazarus, in Luke xvi. 22, 23—a doctrine which may be proved by sundry places in the psalms to have been revealed in David's time and Moses'.

From what has been already stated it is clear, that when it is said "he returneth to his earth," the psalmist meant not, that more of him was included in that "he" than his body and soul: but this, though at death separated from the body, we gather from sundry places in the psalms and elsewhere to be laid in sleep in the grave along with the body; beside whose small indestructible seed it is kept by God. (See Ps. xvi. 8—11, and xxv. 13, 14, and xlix. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 42.) For the spirit is to be understood to have "returned to God Who gave it."

When therefore it is said "he returneth to his earth"—"spirit" being feminine and the verb "returneth" in the third person masculine—it is implied that his "person" continues with his soul and body, though the spirit be withdrawn.

And if we understand by "person" (*πρόσωπον*) that which enables a soul or spirit to consciously present itself to the view of a fellow-man, it will be allowed that the soul's or the man's person is in the grave, and not enjoyed by the disembodied spirit.

This view of the meaning of "he" in the fourth verse is borne out by comparison with sundry places of Scripture treating of the same subject.

For instance, in Isa. xxxviii. where Hezekiah says, at verse 18, "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee, they that go down to the pit cannot hope for Thy truth"—

we are not to suppose, that Hezekiah—a child of God by faith in the promise concerning the Lord to be born of David's line—had no hope that on his spirit going forth, he should *still* be praising God in the separate state—

but he meant, that were he by dissolution to be *personally* in the grave, *he* could not in that public way destined for him at the Lord's coming (Isa. xxxviii. 11), to the view of others, shew forth God's praise: *he* personally could not do this with his *whole* manhood: and his wish was, that all within him should do so. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) Compare herewith St. Paul's similar wish, when treating of the same coming of the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 4.)

That this doctrine was held by the psalmist in the words before us, is to be gathered from the remarkable word used by him in



the second verse immediately before; when saying for *himself* "while I have my being."

The word in Hebrew *בְּעוֹלָם* meaning "in my continuance"—"my existence-yet," or, my after-state—evidently including the separate state, until the resurrection. (Job xiv. 10—15.)

"His earth"—the Adamah for Adam—contains, as it seems to me, emphatic reference to Gen. iii. 19. See a similar emphatic use of "thy" in Luke xvi. 25.

To say, "in that very day *his* thoughts perish," means, that where a man willingly remains in the fallen state (morally) in which he was born (Luke xix. 10, Eph. ii. 2—10), by refusing to put faith in the promise of God concerning Christ for "salvation," he plainly relies on his personal power, during his soul's continuance in the body, to carry into effect *his* plans.

But well-conceived as these may be, and mighty as may be his genius, and princely as may be his social status; notwithstanding all these advantages for carrying them into effect, so soon as he is laid aside by death to sleep in the grave till he shall be raised up for judgment, "his thoughts perish," he cannot ensure the performance of them. (Eccles. ii. 18, 19.)

The way to have our thoughts and hopes endure after dissolution of soul and body is, to become alive unto God in Christ by faith in the promise of God concerning the seed of the woman that should bruise the head of the serpent; and accomplish for man all that God had originally intended—bringing him "restoration of all things." (Acts iii. 21.)

Such an one, although in natural respects continuing to be a son of Adam, is also in a far higher sense, through faith in God's promise (Gal. iv. 28), a Son of God in Christ—the last Adam—yea an heir of God through Christ! (Gal. iv. 7.)

This man "hath the God of Jacob for his help, his hope is in the Lord his God"—his hope standeth fast. (Prov. x. 28; xiv. 32.)

Again, in verse 6, let it be observed, how the claim to be the Creator of heaven and earth is kept in combination with that to be "the keeper of truth for ever," exactly as in Isa. lv. 10, 11.

The consequence of this testimony is, that the first chapters of Genesis, with their account of the Creation of the world, must on no account be surrendered to the sceptical geologist, in the hope of thereby rescuing "the truth" of the promises in Christ, from his profane clutch.

Both are by the Spirit of Christ combined in the inspired writer's mind; and both must be equally combined in that of the pious believer. (See Jer. x. 11, and Rev. xiv. 7.)

"Truth," in verse 6, means realisation of the Divine Archetypal idea at the time of Creation.

In this exhaustive sense it is a synonym for reality as contrasted with vain show. Shakespeare so applies the word to the

reality of nature when saying of Time, that it "feeds on the rarities of nature's truth"—that is, on all therein which is most beautiful.

The fullest realisation of the Divine counsels concerning "salvation" is to be attained in God's sabbatical rest. (Gen. ii. 3, and Heb. iv. 19, 20.)

But there is held out in Scripture to a chosen generation in Israel a hope of "truth," in regard to "salvation," on earth; (See Luke i. 68—75) for a type whereof, as Ezekiel teaches in ix. 12, God specially gave Israel their Sabbath; while the Sabbath originally instituted in Eden was a pledge of God's purpose to bring Adam, even if unfallen, into His own higher state, for Adam's cessation from further probation.

And it appears to me probable that the psalmist, as an Israelite, having this special promise to a latter generation of his own people in mind, when saying in verse 6, "Which keepeth truth for ever"—*לְעוֹלָם* had prime respect to that to Israel in "the hidden age." (See Ps. xxviii. 9.)

In Eccles. iii. 11 is a use of this word *לְעוֹלָם* meaning, as it seems to me, to be there taken in the same sense—it being evidently there used to designate an aspiration after God's purpose in creation of man. (Rom. viii. 19.)

All men have this desire, but he who is brought within the sound of God's revealed word and meekly receives it, is alone able to set this thirst at rest by hope in Christ. Hence, in Haggai ii. 7, Christ is called the desire of all nations—as being He for Whom, without distinctly knowing it, they are yearning.

Jesus emphatically claims to be the "truth" of God, in John xiv. 6, so that no son of Adam can have the God of Jacob for his help, and have hope in the Lord his God, otherwise than by faith in Jesus, now that He is shewn by God to be the promised Christ.

On this account, when Pilate asked Him, "Art Thou a King then?" He replied, "to this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

"Every one that is of the truth heareth My words." (John xviii. 37.)

The rest of the psalm may be regarded as a prediction of Christ's work during His ministry on earth, agreeing with Isa. xxxv., which was abruptly broken off in the midst of His week, (Dan ix. 27) after two days and a half. (Luke xiii. 32.) Consequently, during this first age in the kingdom of heaven, while His Father's Providential Government has resumed its sway, (Luke xxii. 35—37) these latter verses of the psalm before us, from verse 7 to the end, obtain only a spiritual fulfilment. (Rom. xv. 1—6.)

But in the three and a half days of the Lord's bridal week yet

remaining to be fulfilled, at His second Advent, the pledges given in these last four verses shall be redeemed with literal "truth" in respect of the Lord's people (Ezek. xxxvi. 15); and afterwards at the consummation of the mystery of God in regard to all the elect people of God. (Rev. xxi.)

After these preliminary remarks on particular words in this psalm; it remains to be observed that it contains in substance, though more obscurely, a promulgation of the doctrine explicitly taught by the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus, in John iii. 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit: marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (See Ps. li. 10.)

It is generally concluded by commentators that this psalm entirely suits the condition of the Jews in the time spoken of in Ezra viii. 21—23: so that Ezra, who is supposed to have compiled this last book of the psalms, may be reckoned to have been the author hereof.

The delays in rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem after the decree of Cyrus, B.C. 536, till Ezra's journey with the royal order of Artaxerxes, B.C. 457 (79 years), and his own difficulties therein, though bearing the mandate of the then greatest monarch on earth, forcibly exemplify the precept "Put not your trust in princes;" while his words, in the passage referred to, shew how he looked to God first for salvation and keeping of truth.

Ezra was glad of the help of princes and of any son of Adam, so far as they acted in subordination to the truth of God: and his heart's desire in grateful return for their help was, that they might be "of the truth;" even as was he himself. (Acts xxvi. 29.)

But Israelites must hope in God for fulfilment of His promises concerning Zion. (Ps. cxxxii. 11—18.)

In regard to the prospects of the Church of Christ, in this first age of the kingdom of heaven—spiritual Israel—it is now plain to be seen, that if in the days of the Apostles the favour of the Roman Emperor—the then great earthly prince—had been relied on for keeping of God's truth, how Christianity would have by this time become, like that empire, a shadow of the past.

So too, when that empire was broken down by the irruption of Goths and Vandals, the clergy of the Latin nations by elevating the Bishop of Rome to be Prince of the Kings of the earth, in the hope of securing a system of peace for attainment of the expected truth, were doing what the psalmist in verse 3 emphatically forbids.

The consequence was that these Princes of theirs—the Popes—instead of being, like Ezra, "of the truth" by hearing Christ's words, (which are only to be beyond all dispute found in the inspired Scriptures,) by means of men's traditions made

void the commandments of God, as had the Rabbis of Judah before them. (Matt. xv. 1—9.)

If then Christianity had depended on the Pope and his Cardinals, as the great bulk of the clergy of Western Christendom would have pretended, where would it now be, when all that remains to the Popedom of princely grandeur, so as to reign over kings, is the shadowy splendour of the Vatican palace?

Whereas Christianity, as proclaimed by them on earth that desire to “know that they are of the truth, and to assure their hearts daily before Him—the Head of the body—the Church,” (1 John iii. 19—24, Eph. iv. 15, 16) never heretofore was receiving such extensive fulfilment as now. (Matt. xxiv. 14.)

They who are “of the truth” say with St. Paul (Philip. iii. 21), “our governing body—municipal directory—is in heaven, whence we look for the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And again in Col. iii. 1, “If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Mind things above, not things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God—when Christ Who is our life shall manifest Himself, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory.” (See Ps. xxxiii. 11, and cxlix. 5—9.)

### HALLELUJAH.

#### 1.

Do thou, my soul, Jehovah praise !  
I'll praise Him while I live.  
Yea to my God I'll anthems raise,  
In what part I survive.

#### 2.

Nor prince nor son of Adam trust ;  
Salvation 's not in him :  
His spirit gone, he turns to dust :  
Then ends his ev'ry scheme.

#### 3.

Blest man who for his help doth take  
The God of Jacob ! blest  
He truly, who his hope doth make  
In God, his Lord, to rest ;

4.

Which made the heav'n, the earth, the sea,  
 And all that therein is—  
 Which keeps the truth unfailingly  
 Of all His promises.

5.

Judgment for the opprest deals He,  
 And for the hungry bread.  
 Jehovah sets the pris'ners free ;  
 Blind eyes He 's opened.

6.

Jehovah them bow'd down uprears ;  
 Jehovah loves the just ;  
 Dries strangers', orphans', widows' tears ;  
 But rebels down doth thrust.

7.

Jehovah, Who Himself doth call,  
 O Zion, God of thee ;  
 For that age hidden, throughout all  
 Time future King<sup>1</sup> shall be !  
 Hallelujah.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

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## PSALM CXLVII.

### ARGUMENT.

It is highly probable that this psalm, as commentators in general think, was written in Nehemiah's day, after the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon.

But certain expressions in it assuredly lead to the conclusion, that the final settlement of the whole of Israel in their own land was the subject of this psalm; as it is of the others in the series, which begins at the hundred and forty-fifth, and reaches to the end of the book, making six in all.

In proof hereof it may first of all be observed, that when it is said in the 2nd verse—

“The Lord doth build Jerusalem,”

this phrase is elsewhere employed to denote the direct interposition of the Lord from heaven, for the rescue of the remnant of His people from an overwhelming host of assailants, when about to accomplish the final rebuilding of it.

Thus, so early as the fourteenth psalm, in the last verse the question is asked—

“Who will give salvation to Israel out of Zion?”

to which the answer is—

“When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad :”—

which is as much as to say, until the Lord Himself do it, no return of any portion of that people will be finally successful.

To the same effect at the end of Ps. li. we read—

“Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.

“Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and the whole burnt-offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.”

Now this was a psalm of David, written when Jerusalem, which he had been the first to make the capital of his kingdom, had its walls entire.

In asking therefore that God would build the walls of Jerusalem, when they were standing in massive strength, assuredly implied that David anticipated the overthrow of those walls, as also of every re-construction of them, until the Lord Himself, by a direct interposition from heaven, should finally erect them.

The latter part of this 2nd verse of the psalm before us is in keeping with this view of its former clause, for it saith—

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"He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."

Here is an allusion to the prediction in Isa. xi. 12, that "He shall gather the outcasts of Israel," which it is plain happened not on the Jews' return from Babylon, but remains to be accomplished when the Lord will interpose from heaven for rescue of the remnant that shall finally rebuild Jerusalem.

To the same effect are the words of the 3rd verse—

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

For in the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah, after mention of the penitent condition to which Israel shall have been brought in the day of the Lord's return, there occur, at verse 26, words similar to those in the 3rd verse of this psalm, namely—

"The Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

Also the reference to the number of the stars in the 4th verse of this hundred and forty-seventh psalm, is in keeping with the subject of the Lord's rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem at the re-assembling of all Israel, to which we have supposed it to refer. For in Isa. xl. 26, where that consummation of God's dealing with Israel on earth is treated of, the natural backwardness of unrenewed men amongst them to believe that such a thing might be, is rebuked by the enquiry—

"To whom will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, (viz., the sun, moon, and stars) that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might: for that He is strong in power; not one faileth.

"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?"

Here is the very same line of thought which we recognise in the 4th and 5th verses of this hundred and forty-seventh psalm—

"The Lord that setteth a number to the stars—giving names to each—has none that sets Him a number, or gives Him a name."

That is, He is unrivalled. (Isa. xli. 8—10.)

How then can it be impossible for Him to bring about the triumphant return of Israel to their own land, and the final rebuilding of Jerusalem?

It is also worthy of observation that in Gen. xv. the Lord had at outset, when Abram at 100 years old was childless, bidden him look up to heaven, and tell the stars, "if thou be able to number them."

"And He said unto him, So shall thy seed be! And Abram believed in the Lord: and He counted it to him for righteousness."

If this original reference by God to the stars, when speaking to Abram of his future descendants, be borne in mind, the recurrence to the same figure in Isa. xl. 26, as also in this psalm, when treating (as is assumed) of the same subject, is highly impressive.

Moreover, the emphatic distinction made in verses 4 and 5, between Him Who gave a number to the stars and has none to give Him a number, is a manifest repudiation of the favourite theory among ancient philosophers, (which some of late have not been ashamed in this country to adopt,) namely, that the Divine Nature is but the soul or living principle of the universe.

If this were the case, it would be contained within the material universe, and not exist beyond it.

Whereas, to say that God giveth the stars their number; that is, appoints how many there shall be, but has none other to give Him a number, is a claim to be a Personal Being, external to the universe which He made and rules.

The conclusion intended by the psalmist to be gathered from this testimony is, that He can do whatever He hath promised—whatever it pleaseth Him—and consequently, that He will gather together the outcasts of Israel by His own immediate interposition, when (humanly speaking) they are without the means of escaping annihilation.

Agreeably herewith we read at verse 16 of Ps. cii.—

“When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory.”

At that time the 6th verse of this hundred and forty-seventh psalm will receive its conspicuous fulfilment, where it is written—

“The Lord lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground”—

words which have their most appropriate fulfilment in the events referred to by Isaiah in chapter xxvi. 5—

“He bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, He bringeth it low; He layeth it low, even to the ground; He bringeth it even to the dust.

“The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.”

Again, at the 7th verse, the psalmist reverts to the strain in which he broke silence in the 1st verse, saying—

“Sing in alternate strains, unto the Lord, with thanksgiving; sing praises with the harp unto our God.”

After this, the psalmist afresh proves what the Lord can do, if it please Him, to restore Jerusalem and re-establish Israel. For like as the psalmist had before done this by shewing God’s control of the stars, he now proves the like by pointing to His management of the clouds, (Job xxxvii. 16) saying at verse 8—

“Who covereth the heaven with clouds, Who prepareth rain



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for the earth, Who maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains."

Then in the 9th verse—passing from tokens of the Lord's power to those of his care over the inferior creatures, the reader is left to conclude how surely He will care for man—the chief of His creatures on earth—yea Israel—that He hath chosen to be His witnesses. (Isa. xliii. 10.)

To this effect the psalmist saith at verse 9—

"He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens<sup>1</sup> which cry."

After which, in the next verse—the 10th—is another mysterious reference to the events attending the Lord's personal appearance for the rescue of the citizens of Jerusalem from their besieger (Zech. xiv.)—it being written in the 10th verse—

"He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him (as Israel will at that time be brought to do), in those that hope in His mercy."

It would be difficult to shew the harmonious coherence of this testimony concerning the Lord, with the preceding ones of His numbering the stars and ordering the clouds, except we suppose the psalmist to be in this 10th verse darkly referring to the fact elsewhere predicted, that the besieger of Jerusalem, from whom the Lord shall personally rescue the remnant of His people, will for his part delight in his, it may be, unrivalled cavalry—which is, to delight in the strength of the horse and the legs of the rider.

Whereas this boast of the greatest man of that day will be indeed a vain thing when brought against the defenceless people for whom He fights, Who numbers the stars and orders the clouds. Compare Isa. xxxi. 3.

As regards the reliance of the great head of a confederation against Israel at a future day, on his cavalry, we read in Zech. x. 5—

"The riders on horses shall be confounded;" also at chapter xii. 4—

"In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness, and I will open

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 9. Bythner ait, "Arist. Plini. Oleari. et alii referunt corvos sive innatā truculentia, sive potius oblivione, (compare hereon Job xxxix. 13—17,) negligere pullos suos etiam cū adhuc in nidis degunt; qui, a parentibus destituti; querulos in aere clamores præ inedia edunt." De Burgh thinks them to be here mentioned, and in Job xxxviii. 41, and Luke xii. 24, because not dependent on fruits of the earth, but on uncertain subsistence. The raven's nest has a border on which she lays the carrion, and the maggots therein bred are the food of her young.

Mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people's with blindness."

Also in the thirty-third psalm, which treats of the same Divine interposition in Israel's behalf, it is written at verse 16—

"The King shall not be saved by the multitude of a host: the mighty shall not be delivered by much strength.

"A horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength."

At the 12th verse, the psalmist for the second time resumes the strain of praise with which he commenced, saying—

"Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; Praise thy God, O Zion!"

After which, in verses 13 and 14, he praises God for sending peace and plenty; which, as we read in Hosea ii. 21, and Joel ii. 23, 24, will characterise the time, above shewn to be referred to, in this psalm.

But at verses 15 to 17, he speaks of snow coming at a word from God, and hail, and cold, which presently afterwards in verse 18 is spoken of as at a word withdrawn—the congealed waters being unbound beneath the relaxing wind and made to flow.

Now by Ezek. xiii. 11—13, we learn that hailstones shall be an instrument employed by God in that day of the Lord's return to Israel, for destruction of the besieger of Jerusalem.

Also a consultation of Rev. xvi. 21, will shew that the latest Divine rebuke of misguided enemies of Israel may be by hail—where it is written, on speaking of Great Babylon's punishment—

"And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

"And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of hail: for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

After this is mentioned, in verses 19, 20, of the psalm before us—

"He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel.

"He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord!"

These words—brought in immediately after mention of the Lord's at a word sending forth hail—and again, at a word melting the snow and causing the waters to flow—suggest the thought that in like manner, He Who, by withholding His grace from rebellious Israel, hath frozen, as it were, their affections and "hardened their heart from His fear," (Isa. lxiii. 17.) will, when it pleaseth Him, at a word effect the desired change in their conduct; (see Ezek. xx. 36—44) when He shall have a second time called them (Acts vii. 13) to the evangelisation of the

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nations, by being themselves nationally put in trust with His gospel for that end. For it is to be remembered that the present hardening of the Jews from God's fear is owing to their refusal to receive the gospel, when preached to them first after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour. (1 Thess. ii. 14—17.) In consequence thereof, they, nationally, became enemies to the blessed gospel for our sakes, that is, for us who are a new people in Christ's mystical body, gathered by faith in that gospel out of Jews and Gentiles. (Rom. xi. 28; Ephes. ii. 14, 15.)

In that day of the Lord's calling Israel a second time to the preaching of the gospel, it is predicted that "they will not lie," that is, disappoint Him in this matter. (See Isa. lxiii. 8.)

Thus ends this sublime psalm, which foreshadows God's final establishment of all Israel in the Divine favour, for the general advancement of mankind in happiness. Compare the testimony in Rom. ix. 4, touching the statutes and ordinances then to be given Israel. (Matt. xix. 28; with which compare Ps. li. 18, 19; Ezek. xl.—xlviii.)

This psalm so explained, is shewn to be throughout coherent and possessing strict unity of subject, although the Septuagint writers who join the ninth and tenth in one—here divide the hundred and forty-seventh into two—so that they reckon one hundred and fifty psalms—agreeably with the Hebrew MSS.

It remains for us to observe, that whereas we, who by faith in the gospel, whether gathered out of Jews or Gentiles, are in the present age the only remnant of the true Israelites, we ought, individually and nationally, to consider God's mercy in putting us in trust with the gospel as by far the greatest of the many blessings vouchsafed unto us, which we hold the lease of upon the same terms whereon Israel will receive it at the Lord's return—namely, that so "His way may be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations." (Ps. lxvii. 2.)

### 1.

Oh praise ye Jah! for good it is  
Unto our God due praise to sing.  
Within one it doth gender peace;  
In others' sight too credit bring.

### 2.

Jehovah builds Jerusalem;  
And gathers Israel's outcasts home.  
The broken heart He heals in them,  
Lest grief should more their days consume.

3.

He sets a number to the stars,  
And each by name distinguishes.  
Great is our Lord : naught His might bars :  
No sum His understanding has.

4.

Jehovah lifteth up the meek,  
Who of Him crave, what He deems meet :  
But wicked men, the earth that seek  
To sway, He casts 'neath meek ones' feet.

5.

Thanksgivings with alternate tongue  
Unto Jehovah lowly bring ;  
Unto our God be praise forth sung  
Upon the harp's melodious string :

6.

Who heav'n doth cover with His cloud ;  
And rain, to quicken grass, prepare :  
Who by His gifts to beasts for food,  
And to young ravens, proves His care.

7.

Not He in horses takes delight,  
Nor in man's well-knit legs hath pride ;  
With meek ones, small in their own sight,  
Jehovah's favour doth abide.

8.

Jerusalem ! Jehovah praise.  
Praise to thy God, O Zion, give ;  
Who doth strong gates around thee raise,  
And in thee makes thy children thrive.

9.

Within thy borders peace He breeds,  
 And with the fat of wheat thee fills :  
 His fiat o'er earth quickly speeds,  
 His word performs whate'er He wills.

10.

Like wool doth He send forth His snows—  
 In frost, as ashes, nature fold—  
 By hail deals, as with stones, His blows—  
 Who could endure to brave His cold ?

11.

Again doth He His word send forth  
 To thaw the rigours of His snow ;  
 His warm wind shed out o'er the earth,  
 Makes buds to burst—makes streams to flow.

12.

To Jacob were His words display'd—  
 To Israel His statutes shewn.  
 No nation else He visited—  
 To none else made His judgments known.  
 Hallelujah !

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PSALM CXLVIII.

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Hallelujah.

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ARGUMENT.

This psalm is taken by competent persons to be so adapted to its object, that the most eminent of our sacred poets, when desirous of praising God on account of His works in creation, has made it the basis of his composition.

Milton, in the fifth book of his *Paradise Lost*, being desirous

of describing what might have been a morning hymn of our great Sire in paradise, evidently took this psalm as his guide in the embodiment of his conception.

But there is a marked difference between the structure of this psalm and Milton's morning hymn.

This latter is probably most admired for the harmonious and majestic descriptions of each object in creation, as it is called into notice: whereas in the former there is a rigid exclusion of any such descant on the beauty of the works themselves; as though the writer's object was to reserve his express praise for the Creator alone.

Now, where compositions differing in such important particulars are alike deemed to be eminently successful instances of sublimity of conception, it is well worthy of enquiry whereon the claim of either thereto may rest.

That of Milton is evidently ascribable to his felicitous descriptions of the works in creation, as they come under review: for this is the part in which is to be seen his claim to originality.

But how is the sublimity of this psalm to be explained, wherein all for which Milton's hymn is extolled, is studiously excluded?

Longinus, in his treatise on sublimity,<sup>1</sup> observes that one element of it is the use of words, at mention whereof a long train of thought is instantaneously started in the hearer's mind.

Now, it seems to me that the ground whereon rests the sublimity of this psalm may be explained by that rule.

From the first verse to the end of the sixth it brings before the hearer's mental sight one object or other in the heavens.

Again, from the seventh to the end of the twelfth it does the like with one or other object in the earth. The mere mention of any one of these objects made by God—the heavens—the angels—the sun—the moon—is enough to wake up recollection of the attractiveness wherewith God has endued them. The emotions of admiration and pleasure awakened within one at thought of these objects is that, wherein consists the sublimity of the composition.

Now, Milton's claim to sublimity consists in the refined skill wherewith he supplies these for the reader: whereas the psalmist leaves the reader to do this himself: and safely,—because the works of God in heaven and earth are so transcendent, that there cannot be two opinions about them.

Though not two persons, perhaps, have exactly the same measure of acquaintance with them; yet each so far as he knows them is delighted therewith, and is in harmony with his fellow-men thereon.

Now, it has been observed that listeners are gratified by finding something left to their imagination to fill up in understanding

<sup>1</sup> Sect. vii. "For this is really grand, the re-consideration whereof runs far backward, and whereat suppression of upspringing thought is difficult or rather impossible."

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the speaker; only that he must not be abstruse, or he will be obscure to the generality; and so become dull and wearisome.

But the psalmist does not err in this respect, by drawing on his hearer's imagination or memory for all that the mention of God's works in heaven and earth is to call up in the mind: every one of his hearers, even the most illiterate, has sufficient agreement with his fellow-men on this head, to be pleased and filled with admiration at each object called before his mind's eye; yet in so quiet a way, as not for a moment to withdraw his attention from their glorious Author, Whom the psalmist would have them all the while praise: whereas the very elaborateness of Milton's allusions to the angels—the sun—the moon—the stars, so far withdraws the hearer's mind from the one Supreme object of praise—the Divine Author of them all.

The psalmist, knowing how apt the mind is to linger on beautiful objects, carries up the hearer's recollection to Him for Whose sake the works are mentioned; saying at the fifth and sixth verses, concerning the things in the heavens—

“Let them praise the Name of the Lord: for He commanded and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever.

“He hath made a decree which shall not pass.”

Again, at verse 9, he adds, concerning the things in nature on earth, that “they fulfil His word.”

While, of the human inhabitants of all ranks and ages who ought to do so, whether or not intelligent enough to be disposed thereto, he saith at verse 13—

“Let them praise the Name of the Lord, for His Name only is exalted. His glory is above the earth and the heaven.”

Now, I doubt not that the psalmist's rigid exclusion of any laudatory description of God's works themselves, in a psalm expressly designed for lifting up hearers' hearts in praise of Him, is framed according to the truest conception of what is fit and becoming. For, to compare great things with small, it may be observed that, were we to be in the presence of some head of a great family, to whom we owed reverence, we should not, while under his very eye, divert our attention from him to certain of his retinue there present; though they might be friends of ours, and in themselves highly distinguished.

The more distinguished they might be justly reckoned, the more would it be to the honour of that head of the house to have such persons in his suite; particularly if, like a great Emperor, he himself had in his own campaigns trained all those great personages up to the eminence which they then enjoyed.

Our acknowledgment of his superiority over them would be decorously shewn by refrainment from special remark on their

merits in his presence, though far from being unmindful thereof. This is precisely what it seems to me the psalmist here doth: he so frames this psalm, as to shew the reflecting hearer that he considers the Lord, Whom He is praising, to be present.

Speaking as under His eye, he merely gives the name of this or that work of the Great Creator, as though he would have the hearer along with himself bear in mind, that the Author is there to receive, fresh from the hearer's heart, what acknowledgment of gratitude he is minded to make upon contemplation of such admirable creatures.

Assuredly, to lay the hearer under an obligation to think that he is in the presence of that Being Whose works are mentioned, for the sake of shewing forth His glory, is an important element in sublimity of composition.

Here then it is, that the psalmist's austere rigour in recital of the bare names of God's works is better fitted than Milton's more elaborate expansion thereof to keep the hearer's mind in undivided attention to the Lord; just as we have supposed that, if one of us might on some public occasion have been in presence of the first Napoleon, surrounded by his marshals, we should not at that moment lose sight of the Emperor's achievements in admiration of theirs, especially if engaged in converse with the Emperor himself.

But what was he when surrounded by all the celebrities of his training, whether in the civil or military department, that he should be compared with that exalted Being Whom the psalmist was endeavouring to set before his readers' minds, surrounded in imagination by the glories of His creation, Whose Name is exalted, he devoutly suggests, "above earth and heaven"?

After this climax it might have been thought by some that nothing more was left to be said.

But the psalmist finds a fresh topic for exhortation of his hearers to praise of the Most High God by mention of "what He hath done for Israel," which is His work of redemption.

After having brought the hearer in verse 13 to acknowledgment of God's exaltation above every creature on earth and in heaven, the psalmist intimates that, exalted as God is, He calls them that during this life believe in His word, and become His saints, to be eventually partakers with Him in His own glorious rest.

In Christ—the horn of David and of Israel—He exalteth them to the privilege of sitting down on His throne or abiding state.

How then ought these that are sanctified by His Spirit—His Israel—brought nigh in Christ—to wait on Him with lowly gratitude!

His works of redemption are thus made to rivet on our hearts that obligation to praise Him alone, which had been wakened up by His works in creation.



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It seems to me therefore that this psalm, in the rigorous severity wherewith it is constructed, and the powerful appeal it makes to our gratitude for His opening to us a way of participation in His own happiness through holiness, possesses in a very eminent degree the element of sublimity, and is highly incentive to praise of our God and Father in heaven.

1.

From heav'n's high summit peal Jehovah's praise :  
Ye angels, anthems in His praise forth pour.  
Sun too and moon, and you, ye stars, that blaze  
By night the dome-like empyrean o'er.

2.

Ye heav'ns surmounting heav'ns swell this song ;  
And you, ye waters, stor'd above the sky ;  
The praise that to Jehovah doth belong,  
Your very aspect shall at once supply.

3.

At His command they into being rose,  
Lo ! at His word burst they forth, as they are :  
In changeless order did He each dispose  
To stand by His decree firm everywhere.

4.

From earth, too, let there sound Jehovah's praise.  
Ye monsters peopling the unfathom'd deeps,  
Fire, hail, snow, vapours spreading a dense haze,  
And stormy blast, that His commandment keeps.

5.

Ye tow'ring mountains, and ye lowly hills ;  
Trees of the garden or the forest growth ;  
Wild beasts, or cattle that the homestead fills ;  
Insects, and fowl 'mid heav'n flying forth ;

6.

Kings and their subjects—people great and small—  
 Ye princes and all judges of the earth;  
 Ye youth of either sex—the boy and girl;  
 Old men, and babes but now come to the birth.

7.

Let these the great Name of Jehovah praise :  
 For His Name only is pre-eminent.  
 The glory, that He in Himself displays,  
 Is far 'bove earth and 'bove the firmament.

8.

Yet doth He for His people's sake exalt  
 Their horn, Who is of all His saints the praise :<sup>1</sup>  
 That in His Israel should be found no fault,  
 The people He doth nigh unto Him place !  
 Hallelujah.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 14. In 2 Thess. i. 10 we read that Christ is to be "admired in all them that believe."

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PSALM CXLIX.

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ARGUMENT.

The new song here spoken of is one in newness of spirit, not in oldness of letter. (Rom. vii. 6.)

Saints are sanctified ones : those who after hearing the gospel and putting faith in it, are by the Holy Ghost joined to Christ, so as to have "passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

Provided these believers, so joined to Christ in His sacrificial death, lift up thence prayer to the Father for a measure of the Spirit of Christ for their renewal (Gal. iv. 6.) they are surely accepted of the Father and sanctified with the Spirit of adoption.

These, and not the ungodly or wicked among nominal pro-

fessors, are here called to meet and form a congregation wherein to praise Jehovah.

“These ever bring Thee, (Jesus) where they come,  
And going, take Thee to their home.”

In the second verse we find a mysterious reference to the Trinity in the words,—

“Let Israel rejoice in his Makers.”

Those who believe in Jesus, whether from among Jews or Gentiles, are at present “the only remnant of the true Israelites:” and by our Church’s Catechism is shewn in questions on the Apostles’ Creed, how, although God be One, there is a plurality in Him.

The Father made us, and all the world.

The Son redeemed us, and all mankind.

The Holy Ghost sanctifieth us, and all the elect people of God.

Those then that have been at their own earnest desire fitted to praise Jehovah, are here called to meet together and make a congregation for that purpose, that they may stir up one another’s zeal and love therein. (Heb. x. 19—25.)

The latter part of the second verse is,—

“Let the children of Zion be joyful in their king.”

We of the true Israelites are also the only “children of Zion” at this present, being made so by conformity to “the rod of Christ’s power,” which the Father “sent forth out of Zion,” “on that Pentecost next after the ascension of the Lord Jesus. (Ps. cx. 2.)

May the Holy Ghost touch our hearts, and dispose us to cry, as did that band following our Lord into Jerusalem, Hosanna! In Matt. xxiii. 39, the Lord significantly told His own people, that they should not see His face, after He had once left them desolate, until they should say,—

“Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord;” that is, bearing the honoured Name of the Lord! Oh that we by grace may now ascribe to Him this praise! Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!

In the third verse is written,—

“Let them praise His Name with the pipe, let them sing praises with timbrel and harp.”

Here are three kinds of instruments—those pierced with holes—those covered with skin, as the drum or tambour—those emitting sound by vibration of strings.

With these aids to the voice, we are often in Scripture charged to exalt the Lord’s Name, and are taught that the same shall be done in heaven.

But nowhere are we in Scripture called on to bring flowers, or decorate therewith the place of prayer, to God’s glory.

And there is a fear, that if a minister were to yield in this respect, by calling for the dressing of the church with flowers,

(which is a human device) as well as for the song with instrumental help (which should be out of a loving heart) he would soon find these externals, when multiplied, offered in place of that heart service, which God, Who is a Spirit, invariably requires (John iv. 23): and which even "the children of Zion" find it so arduous to render. (See Philip. iii. 1—3.) He has no alternative therefore but to confine himself to requirement of that service with the heart aided by vocal and instrumental music, for which there is authority in Holy Scripture.

The fourth verse is, "For Jehovah hath pleasure in His people; He will beautify the meek with salvation."

Here is our encouragement to offer praise unto our King and God!

He hath pleasure therein.

Not that He needs our service for His own happiness; but because there appears to be no other way whereby moral responsible creatures admit of being made partakers in His holiness, than by proving their desire for it; and this is to be proved, among other ways, in praising Him! He delighteth in the prosperity of His servants! This is the most exalted way of being prosperous: namely, in holiness; for without holiness no man shall see His face or share His rest. Heb. xii. 14. It is written in Ps. xxii. 3, "Thou art Holy, O Thou, that inhabitest the praises of Israel." In Isa. lvii. 19, is to be seen how He doth this. "He creates the fruit of the lips," that is, in answer to prayer for renewal with the Holy Ghost, He puts the Spirit of His Son into one's heart, Which rising to the lips in thanks, and praise, and prayer, yields "fruit."

But this Spirit is His own Divine nature, consequently "He inhabiteth the praises of Israel," bring in that respect the believer's Maker or New Creator.

And when He finds us zealous in obtaining renewal, for the sake of yielding Him this fruit, He taketh pleasure in His people; so desirous is He (speaking after the manner of man) that they should be partakers of His holiness!

These people are "the meek" or poor. See Isa. lxi. 1, to whom the Gospel is preached. These He "beautifies" with more grace, "the beauties of holiness." Ps. cx. 2. The fifth verse is, "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds." The meaning of this verse is difficult to be determined.

Some think it a call to them whose eyes are held by God waking at night (Ps. lxxvii. 4), to say as did Elihu, in Job xxxv. 10, "Where is God my Maker, that giveth songs in the night." (Ps. xlii. 8.)

Others think it is a call to that part of the Church which is in the separate state to join with their brethren in mortal bodies on earth, in praise of their King and God; for—

"One family, we dwell in Him—  
One church, above, beneath;  
Tho' now divided by the stream—  
The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God,  
To His command we bow!  
Part of the host have cross'd the flood,  
And part are crossing now!"

In Isa. lvii. 2, there is an undoubted use of "bed" for the grave, and to me it seems clear, that in this fifth verse of the psalm before us, it has in the psalmist's intention that meaning. But it appears to me, that he is in spirit carried forward to speak of that crisis referred to in Isa. xxvi. 13—21, where in the last struggle of the saints on earth with Antichrist, immediately preceding the Lord's second Advent by unfurling of His sign in the clouds of heaven, (Matt. xxiv. 30) it seems darkly intimated, that through the severity of the persecution, the "meek" will be required to accept death in firm faith, that the grave is a chamber, wherein to retire and shut their doors about them, until the wrath of God, which permits Antichrist to rage against them, be past; and the Lord, Who is then to be in the upper air, (1 Thess. iv. 16, and Zech. xiv. 5) manifest Himself!

It may be, that though in their graves, there will be white raiment given to these meek ones (Rev. vi. 9—11), and they on their beds shall literally praise the Lord till the hour, which is mercifully shortened, be over. (Matt. xxvi. 22.)

That past, they shall be actually called forth from their graves to join with the latter generation of Israel that survives, (for the earth shall cast forth her dead as regards *them*, the word "till," limiting it to them, Isa. xxvi. 20,) in executing the commission in the verses which follow! (Rev. iii. 24—29.) We are here reminded, how St. Peter saith, that "if when we do well and suffer for it, we take it patiently, this is thankworthy." (1 Peter ii. 19.)

Now praise of God, whereto we are called in the psalm before us, is evidently conducive to cheerfulness in His service; and such help is the more necessary to be resorted to, when the strait to be passed through is the narrower. (2 Cor. ix. 7.)

Praise of God is also a preservative against the incursions of evil or repining thoughts, by kindling anew "the expulsive force of a new affection."

Here then are reasons why we should prudentially cultivate praise of God, privately and in the congregation, remembering that hereby too we give pleasure to Him who delighteth in the prosperity of His servants. (Luke xv. 7 and 10.) For He would have us partakers in His holiness.

For we are hereby stirred up to joyful aspirations after it, in the midst of tribulation on His account (Matt. v. 12), while our

patience under tribulation redounds to His praise in the world.  
(2 Cor. ix. 10—15.)

Oh that these considerations suggested by the psalm before us may move the reader to seek out some choice passages of Scripture, suited for praise, or some hymns to the same effect for exercise of the heart in this gladdenng service! as becomes children of Zion—saints, who are joyful in their King!

1.

Hallelujah! in the newness  
Of the Spirit sing, O sing  
To Jehovah! let His due praise  
Through the saints' assembly ring!

2.

Joy, O Israel, in your Makers!  
Zion's children in your King!  
Melody's sweet-ton'd awakers—  
Pipe and harp, and timbrel—bring!

3.

For Jehovah in His chosen  
Finds delight; yea beautifies  
Meek ones, who their hopes repose on  
Him, with their best energies.

4.

Loud ye saints rejoice in glory;  
On your lowly couches sing!  
Blest the work, that lies before ye,  
When in God's cause up ye spring!

5.

Handling your two-edg'd swords boldly,  
On the heathen vengeance take!  
Kings in iron bondage hold ye—  
Princes' pride with fetters break,

## 6.

Righteous vengeance on the nations,  
 As 'tis written, to bring down!  
 Of His saints long-harass'd patience,  
 Hallelujah! this the crown!

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 PSALM CL.
 

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 ARGUMENT.
 

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This psalm begins with Hallelujah, or Praise ye Jah!  
 Then follows, Praise ye El or God!

The distinction between these names is to be gathered from Exod. vi. 3, where Jah or Jehovah appears to be the Name denoting that the Creator will "reconcile all things unto Himself," which by the fall of man have been alienated from Him. (Col. i. 20.) Whereas El is God's name as the Creator.

In regard to this exhortation in verse 1,—

"Praise ye God,"—

it is to be observed how, in the closing section of Ps. cxix. verse 171, we read:—

"My lips shall utter praise, when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes."

Also in Ps. lxxxi. 3, it was written:—

"Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,

In the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day.

For this was a statute for Israel,

And a law for the God of Jacob."

In commenting on that psalm it was shewn to be highly probable that the trumpet was a musical instrument first made by God's direction, as recorded in Numb. x., to commemorate the delivery of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, with the sound as of a trumpet.

Again, in 1 Cor. xiv. 7, the sound of the trumpet is used by St. Paul for a figurative representation of that infusion of the Spirit of God, whereby the true ministers of Christ everywhere preach one gospel harmoniously, and without uncertainty of sound.

What then, if the psalmist, when in the hundred and nineteenth psalm saying, "My lips shall utter praise, when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes," according to the light granted in

his day, spake of that infusion of the Spirit for the purpose of uttering the praises of God, which should be poured out upon the Apostles of the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem, in the sight of the world, after He had ascended unto heaven to His Father's right hand, for the purpose of receiving it from Him?

So surely as the Israelites had authority for rendering God praise on solemn feast-days with the trumpet by "statute," have we of Christ's Church for rendering Him praise, by first receiving a measure of His Spirit unto that end.

To use the psalmist's language in the hundred and nineteenth psalm, we need to be "taught by Him this statute," before we can utter praise, as we ought, through Christ our ascended Lord.

If we be energised with a measure of the Spirit of Christ unto that end, in answer to our prayer for it, after the manner of the psalmist, then is our praise "the fruit of the lips, which God creates" (Isa. lvii. 19); because the Spirit put by Him in our hearts rises to our lips in praise or thanksgiving, or prayer or intercession, as the case may be. In this way, to use the language of Christ by David, in the twenty-second psalm, at verse 8, God "inhabits the praises of Israel."

In this way, too, we arrive at the true sense of St. Paul's prayer, wherewith he concludes his Epistle to the Galatians, (vi. 18), saying:—

"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit."

By this he meant not their human spirit, but that portion of the Spirit of God which had been, (as St. Paul charitably assumed,) granted to them for the purpose of worshipping God according to His "statute" on this head.

Unmistakeable trace of this doctrine is met with in our Church's form of daily service, where there is provided to be said by the minister immediately after the Creed, and preparatory to the lesser Litany, this versicle—

"The Lord be with you."

Whereto (as an amœbic response) it is provided for the congregation to reply:—

"And with Thy Spirit."

Meaning that portion of the Spirit of Christ wherewith not only the minister, but each of his congregation who would worship God aright, must know, "when He shall have taught them His statutes," that they need to be endued by Him before they can yield Him aright praises and other fruit of the lips.

If, now, we have indeed been taught by God His statutes on this head, the prefatory language of the psalmist in the hundred and nineteenth psalm, in the section before referred to, acquires a real rather than a figurative significance. For when he opens the section with saying, "Let my cry come near before Thee, O Lord," it has been observed by commentators, that the psalmist



in a boldly conceived figure of speech, personifies his prayer, by asking God to permit it to come as a living being into His presence, before His face, in heaven.

But we may enquire, is what the psalmist here asks only a bold figure, or is it not rather a reality? If praise uttered by one to whom God has taught His statute on that head is the fruit of a measure of the Spirit of Christ rising from the worshipper's heart to his lips, may it not (if rightly made ours by our entertainment of it, though all the while undivided from Christ—being a measure of the Spirit of Christ) really come acceptably within the veil into the presence of God, where Christ our ascended Mediator presents it, Who pleads for us according to the covenant sealed with His blood, laid sacrificially before the throne of God?

May not also the need of appropriating Christ's Spirit to be ours by faith be denoted in that language of our Liturgy—

“The Lord be with thy Spirit.”

For though the Spirit be the Spirit of Christ given us, yet it will not be available for us, so that the Father should be “with us” therein to bless us for Christ's sake, unless we be “serving Him—the living God—with living faith.” (Heb. ix. 14.) For after this manner holy desires, which come from the Father into our hearts, only become our own when we entertain them.

Persuaded I am that a statute of the God of Israel concerning worship has, in the above words from Ps. xxii. 3, and Isa. lvii. 19, been Scripturally spoken of, and that to this statute the psalmist referred in verse 171 of the last section of Ps. cxix., which also has been for the first time fully unfolded in the Epistles of St. Paul.

Persuaded, too, I am, that in this way our praises and prayers—being measures of the Spirit of Christ given us, “come near before God” to be acceptably presented, and interpreted by our High Priest, more fully than we ourselves know how to express, who cannot articulately utter all that the Spirit within our bosom prompts us to desire; as St. Paul teaches in Rom. viii. 26.

This explicit exposition of the language respecting a believer's acquisition of the power to worship God aright will, I trust, be deemed by my reader a parting word of refreshment, on arriving at the exhortation in this closing psalm to praise Jehovah, the Creator. (Ps. cxv. 15.)

According to the first verse we are, in the strength above referred to, to praise—El—the Creator “in His Sanctuary,” or congregation on earth:—

and again; “in the firmament of His power,” or the outstretched expanse of the sky enveloping the universe, just as David is seen to have done in Ps. v. verses 3 and 7, compared together.

According to the second verse, we are to praise Him—El—for His mighty acts—in regard to what He did, by Christ, in crea-

tion, or rescue of Israel out of Egypt—or much more (as we now know) by redemption of mankind, wherein is to be seen what El is to us. For “the only-begotten Son Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him :” (John i. 18, and xvii. 26,) after which the psalmist exhorts us in this verse to praise the Creator according to His excellent greatness—that is, in regard to what He is in Himself—what He hath not revealed, wherein He is unsearchable.

In the next three verses the saints of God are bid call to their aid in the work of praise instrumental music, which we have shewn in regard to the kind first mentioned to have been in all probability directly derived from heaven ; as beyond question, indirectly, are all the other instruments—the whole being ten in number—a definite for an indefinite—to shew that whatsoever man employs to produce within him emotions of gladness, cannot be more worthily used than in the praise of God, and ought to be so used, where it is practicable, in His congregation. Of the instruments here mentioned—

שׁוֹפָר, the trumpet—in Joshua vi. 4, 5, 6, of ram’s horns. So called, says Gesenius, from its clear sharp sound.

כִּנּוֹר, the psaltery—but twice in Isa. and Amos ‘the viol.’

כַּנְתֹּר, the harp, played with the hand ; not with a plectrum (as Josephus says, Ant. vii. 12, Sect. 3).

חֲדָד, the timbrel.

מְחֹל, a pipe or flute. De Burgh observes that in Ps. xxx. 11, and Jer. xxxi. 4, 13, it means a species of triumphant procession in measured motion, accompanied by music ; such as that led by Miriam in Exod. xv. 20, 21.

מִנִּים, literally—‘strings’—stringed instruments.

עֲנַב, pipes, originally played with the mouth like the Pandean pipes—the foundation of the organ ; mentioned in Gen. iv. 21.

צִלְצִלִּים, cymbals, a name evidently derived from the sound—warbling sweetly or loud sounding.

In the last verse the psalmist calls on all that have breath ; namely, every intelligent<sup>1</sup> soul, to praise Jah—thus shewing Jah to be El. (Gen. xxviii. 21 ; Deut. xxvi. 17.)

It seems to me that we here find ample warrant and encouragement for introduction of suitable instruments into Divine worship : and that it would be such shabbiness as men energised with the Spirit of God could not be guilty of, after having been made by God to abound in wealth, to grudge Him on the score of

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 5. נֶפֶשׁ מְחִיָּה, the rational soul, see Joshua xi. 14, where man is thus distinguished from the beasts ; also in Job xxxiv. 14, 15, man is declared to be possessed of two living principles—the רִיחַ or animal life, and נֶפֶשׁ מְחִיָּה—“rational life.” (So Isa. xlii. 5 ; Prov. xx. 27 ; Job. xxxii. 8.)

expense, the best of music that can be procured, to be used in the Congregation along with the breath of man in His praise. (2 Chron. v. 13 ; Ezra iii. 10—13 ; Rev. xv. 2, 3.)

### HALLELUJAH.

#### 1.

Laud God in His house of prayer,  
Laud Him 'bove the out-spread air,  
Laud Him for pre-eminence,  
Laud Him for His excellence.

#### 2.

Laud Him with the trumpet sharp,  
With the psalt'ry and the harp,  
Him with pipe and timbrel laud,  
Him with use of reed and chord.

#### 3.

Laud Him on the cymbals soft,  
Or whose sound is borne aloft—  
Ev'ry soul that owns His care  
Laud Jehovah every where.

Hallelujah!

THE END.









1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.





